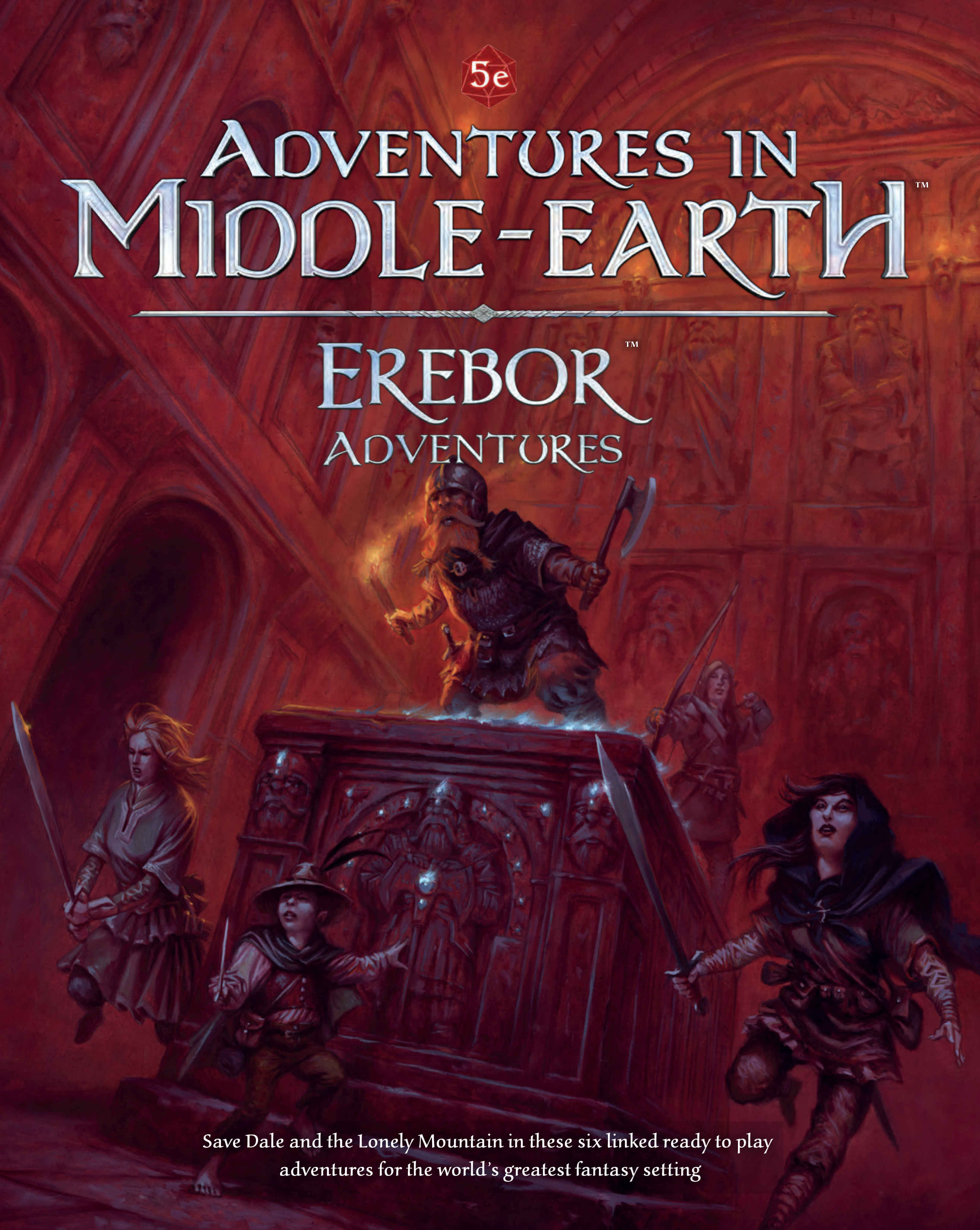

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ADVENTURES IN MIDDLE-EARTH™

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Save Dale and the Lonely Mountain in these six linked ready to play
adventures for the world's greatest fantasy setting

ADVENTURES IN MIDDLE-EARTH™

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- Introduction -

Then Smaug really did laugh... "Revenge!" he snorted, and the light of his eyes lit the hall from floor to ceiling like scarlet lightning. "Revenge! The King under the Mountain is dead and where are his kin that dare seek revenge? Girion Lord of Dale is dead... where are his sons' sons that dare approach me?"

This supplement presents six ready-to-play adventures for your Company of heroes, complete scenarios that concern both the Dwarves of Erebor and the Men of Dale. They can be played separately, or as a series of connected adventures set in the years after 2956 and taking place in and around the Lonely Mountain. These adventures draw on the setting details contained in the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*, and that supplement contains information needed to run this series of adventures. Furthermore, these adventures can be integrated with the *Mirkwood Campaign*, and, while that volume is not essential, having it on hand will be helpful as well.

With the death of Smaug and the return of hope to the region, Sauron's plans to bring Dragon-fire and savage swords to Wilderland have been momentarily foiled. Thwarted and enraged by Gandalf's scheming, the Lord of Mordor has ordered another one of his Ringwraiths to leave Minas Morgul and travel to Rhovanion to plunge the North into a state of ruin.

This time, Sauron's chosen agent will act with subtlety, enthralling Men and perverting the desire of Dwarves and Elves so that their own deeds will further the will of the Dark Tower.

Following are summaries of the six adventures presented in the supplement.

The Silver Needle

A mysterious Bandit-lord known by the name of Longo wants to steal a wondrous artefact in Dale. The adventurers become involved to stop the bandits and run afoul of Orcs in the marshes and in Dale itself. The first hints at a conspiracy are encountered.

Of Hammers and Anvils

The company rescues the famed Dwarf Balin and helps him investigate a number of troubling events in Dale. A plan attempting to mar the peace of Erebor is uncovered, and sabotage must be avoided.

To Dungeons Deep

The discovery of a long-lost heirloom of the House of Girion threatens to sow mistrust between the crowns of Erebor and Dale. Wisdom is required to prevent old grudges from resurfacing.

Sleeping Dragons Lie

In the Withered Heath, someone, or something, has kindled the wrath of a dragon, and the great monster threatens to unleash his fury on the Dalelands. The companions travel to the peak of Zirakinbar, in a desperate attempt to spare Erebor from certain destruction.

Dark Waters

The companions are in Esgaroth for the upcoming annual celebration of Dragontide. They have come to see the presentation of the bronze statue of King Bard, but soon become entangled in a web of revenge, secrets and lies.

Shadows in the North

When Balin warns of a threat to both Mountain and City, he does not realise that traitorous forces manipulate him. The heroes must use subtlety and rely upon the bonds of friendship to win their freedom. Then they must confront the greatest servants of the Enemy to prevent war in the North.

Invoking Personality Traits

The *Adventures in Middle-earth Player's Guide* provides information on how to use a hero's traits (Distinctive Quality, Speciality, Hope and Despair) to earn Inspiration and provides details on combining Specialities and ability checks. In order to help highlight the traits that make each hero unique, *Erebor Adventures* provides additional optional rules for using a companion's Distinctive Quality.

When an adventure notes that a particular trait can be invoked, a Player-hero with that Distinctive Quality automatically receives the result, which is usually something that would require an ability check. If no heroes have the appropriate Distinctive Quality and the adventure doesn't specify a check, the Loremaster should call for a DC 10 check of the appropriate ability to achieve the result instead.

A Loremaster character can invoke a trait to grant Advantage or Disadvantage on a Player-hero's roll.

How to Use This Guide

Even if each quest presented in this supplement is played as a stand-alone adventure, they tell a wider tale between the lines. The bond tying Dáin and Bard and their cities is being tested by a treacherous plan set in motion by the Dark Lord. Minions of Sauron are working behind the scenes to to sow strife and discord, twisting the will of mortals and using them to strike unseen from the shadows.

The following descriptions present the main personalities that appear in several of the adventures in this volume. These represent the main cast of characters working for or against the dark conspiracy threatening the unity of the northern kingdoms.

The Sorcerer of Forod

The great schemer behind the majority of the plots in this supplement is the Sorcerer of Forod, one of the nine Nazgûl. Known once among the Elves as Morlach, the Black Flame, he was a wise and noble man among the Northmen of Rhovanion. His spirit was ensnared by the Dark Lord with promises of endless knowledge. Sauron eventually gave him a ring of power, enabling him to wield great sorcery, but condemned him to fade and eventually become a bodiless wraith. When the Sorcerer finally shed his mortal appearance and became one of the Ringwraiths, Sauron unleashed him against the North. Some say that it is due to his malevolence that the Dragons of the Northern Wastes were roused and made to attack the Dwarves of the Grey Mountains.

Now, the Sorcerer of Forod has been sent back to the North by his Master. The Ringwraith knows the lands and the people of Rhovanion very well, and he intends to employ this lore to sow discontent and strife over many years. When the bonds between the free folk of the North are weakened to the breaking point, a direct strike will have maximum efficacy. A simple attempt at the lives of Bard or Dáin will not do: The rising spirit of hope in the region must be broken, and its people made ready for the dominion of Mordor when that time comes.

In most of the adventures the actions of the Sorcerer of Forod occur behind the scenes, without the companions being able to encounter the Nazgûl face to face. In Shadows in the North, the deeds of the Player-heroes will force the Ringwraith's hand, and he will reveal himself in a desperate bid to topple the throne of Erebor. (see the Appendix on page 154 for the characteristics of the Sorcerer of Forod).

Hakon and Jofur

Hakon and Jofur appear in Erebor Adventures as two powerful courtiers who are helping King Bard in his day-to-day activities. Starting from the year 2957, when the King's mood begins keeping him away from the public eye more and more, Hakon and Jofur begin taking his place. Where generally their help is welcomed by most, some say that the two nobles are taking advantage of this moment of weakness on part of the King.

Lord Hakon

Not all of Sauron's servants are wraiths. Hakon is a Barding thegn who was once a rich and influential merchant from Lake-town (first seen in the *Lonely Mountain Region*

Guide, page 61). He lost everything when Smaug fell on the city, and has been struggling to recover his former status ever since. Nominally a supporter of King Bard, Hakon spent years building a web of allies among rogues and criminals to pursue his personal aims, while at the same time posing as a trustworthy advisor to the throne of Dale.

When the Sorcerer of Forod returned to the North, the Ringwraith came to see the courtier at Hakon's holdings in the Upper Marches. There, the Nazgûl made him an offer the thegn could not refuse, and Lord Hakon has been in Morlach's grasp ever since.

Manipulated by the Sorcerer of Forod into believing he would be a better King, Hakon is putting all his efforts and resources to bring the downfall of Bard. He is unaware that the promised crown will mean very little should Mordor's plans come to full fruition.

Thegn Jofur

Jofur descends from a family from the southern Nether Marches that long ago settled in Lake-town. An official of the city of Dale, he strongly believes that the welfare of the realm should rely on the decisions of wise men and on the rule of law, not on the violent intervention of powerful lords (or even so-called 'heroes', for that matter). This position often puts him at odds with Lord Hakon, even if he doesn't suspect the nobleman to be anything more than exceedingly ambitious.

His uncompromising ideals can even make him appear to be the villain of the campaign in several instances, and Jofur is likely to be disliked by the Company, if not considered to be guilty of great wrongdoing. Nothing could be further from the truth: Jofur is steadfastly loyal to King Bard, but knows how delicate the balance of power is right now, with a weakened ruler on the throne.

Balin, Son of Fundin

One of Thorin's Company who accompanied Bilbo's adventure to the Lonely Mountain, Balin is committed to peace in the region more than anyone else in Erebor. He works tirelessly as a loyal servant of King Dáin, and as a friend of King Bard. Distraught at watching everything he worked to restore sink into misery, Balin seeks to preserve the alliance of the two kingdoms at all costs. He undertakes what needs to be done behind the scenes to maintain the good times that the death of the Dragon has brought to Erebor and Dale. (Read more about Balin in the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide* on page 24).

Journey Events

The *Lonely Mountain Region Guide* provides an extensive set of example standard Journey Events customised for the lands around Erebor and includes some characters that appear in *Erebor Adventures*. However, there are additional custom Journey Events provided herein for certain adventures. These can be used in substitution for randomly generated events or in addition to them.

Experience Awards

Throughout this volume you'll see symbols in the margin. These indicate a chance for the Loremaster to award Experience Points for overcoming challenges. These opportunities are optional, to be made at the Loremaster's discretion and in accordance with the method of levelling they have chosen.

Challenge	XP	Challenge	XP
1	200	7	2,900
2	450	8	3,900
3	750	9	5,000
4	1,100	10	5,900
5	1,800	11	7,200
6	2,300	12	8,400

Individual Award 🟥 🟩 **Group Award**

They might form a direct, numerical award, or a silently observed instance that counts towards gaining a whole level if enough are checked off.

Every game will vary, but these Experience Awards have been calculated to offer a good chance for a typical Company to level up in accordance with the pace we suggest for this campaign.

Erebor Adventures makes use of the Companion and Challenge Rating Experience Award Table (provided below) for non-combat encounters. Just as a combat encounter should be scaled to reflect the size of your Company, so too should these Awards be scaled to match your group of adventurers. If you are running the *Mirkwood Campaign* and *Erebor Adventures* concurrently, you may wish to reduce rewards given in both volumes by 1 step and ignore rewards given in the Epilogues in order to keep in line with the progression expectations in that larger campaign.

The symbols in **red** represent an individual achievement and are awarded to a single hero. Those in **green** are intended to be divided amongst the Company. Experience derived from battle is calculated according to the core rules – for the sake of simplicity and consistency there is no change there.

The Passing of Years

If you want to follow the default pacing of gameplay suggested for *Adventures in Middle-earth,* playing all the adventures contained in *Erebor Adventures* should take several years.**The Silver Needle** might begin in 2957 after the tragic death of Queen Una the previous year. If the pace of one adventure per year continues, this places **Shadows in the North** opening in the year 2962.

A faster pace might put **The Silver Needle** and **Of Hammers and Anvils** in the same year, **To Dungeons Deep** the next year, **Sleeping Dragons Lie** the spring afterwards, with **Dark Waters** that same year or next. In any case, some time should pass before the final confrontation found in **Shadows in the North**.

- the silver-needle

for heroes of level 6 or 7

- **When**: This adventure is set at the end of the summer of the year 2957.
- **Where:** The companions start in the city of Dale, leave town to track down a bandit leader, and end up fighting in the alleys of the Old Quarter.
- **What:** The Company seeks the leader of a bandit gang plaguing travellers heading near Dale. The companions discover the bandits are after an old craftswoman and her prized possession.
- **Why:** The old woman is the owner of a wondrous item possessing great power. It blesses her creations with an almost lifelike quality.
- **Who:** The craftswoman, Kelda, is targeted by Longo the Bandit-lord.
- **Themes:** The Company will learn that evil thoughts lurk behind pleasant faces, a truth that will serve them well as the darkness begins to creep over Dale and the Mountain.

Adventuring Phase

This adventure is divided into four parts.

Part One - At the Traders Gate

Traders leave Dale, their carts laden with goods from the summer trading season, and their heads full of talk of bandits. Evil men attack an old woman. A meek Hobbit far from home has information on why she was attacked.

Part Two - Searching the Roads

The bandits and their leader, Longo, have been seen on the roads to the south of Dale. The companions leave Dale to find the bandits, but will find more than simple robbers.

Part Three - Thieves in Dale

Rushing back to Dale, the Company finds Kelda's home engulfed in flames. Amongst the crowd, the bandits flee with their prize.

Part Four - The Bandits' Lair

A final showdown in the ruins of the Old Quarter.

Epilogue

The Bandit-lord is dealt with and the final disposition of the Silver Needle is made.

Of Relics and Needles

The adventure features two Wondrous Artefacts, one cursed and one blessed. Longo, a Hobbit-turned-bandit-leader, years ago found a black dagger-sheath in the Barrow-downs. Made by the Men of Westernesse, the sheath is tainted by a Curse of Weakness that awoke dark thoughts of violence and murder in the Hobbit and condemned him to a life of misdeeds.

The cursed Hobbit seeks the Silver Needle, an ancient object of Elven-make, used for centuries to create marvellous dresses and clothing that in time now in the keeping of Kelda, an embroiderer from Dale (see page 11). Longo was informed of the needle's existence by agents of the Sorcerer of Forod, who wishes to steal the artefact to further his plans of slowly bringing misery and despair to the area. But Longo does not require an excuse to desire such

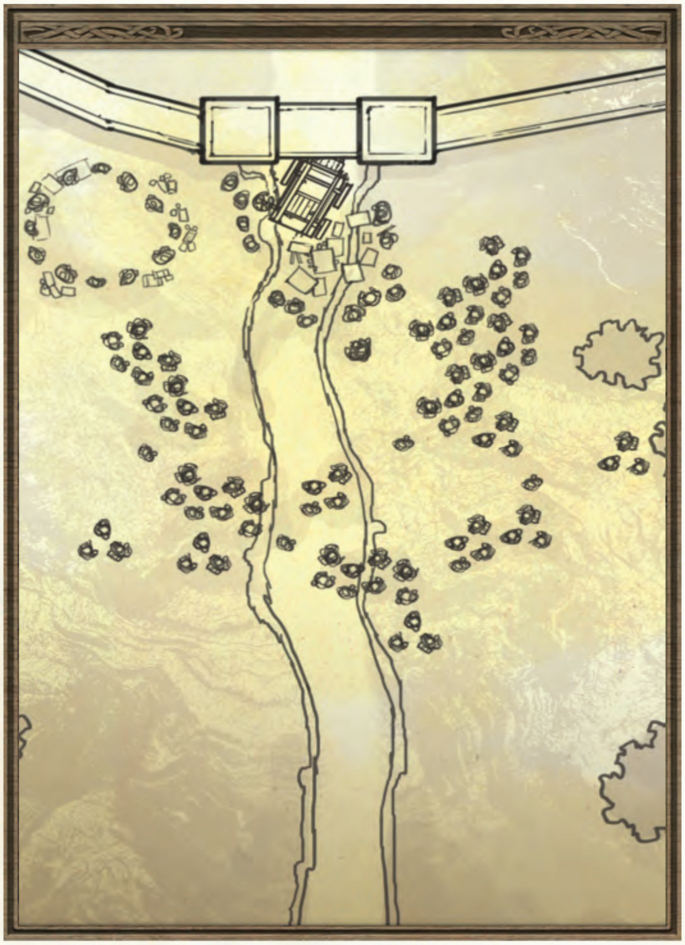
- Part One -
At the Traders Gate

The end of the summer trading season has come to Dale. For days on end, the Merchants Way teems with carts piled high with goods, streaming away from the town. Buyers from all over Wilderland and beyond leave the Market Square, carrying barrels of salted fish taken from the headwaters of the River Running, longbows and shields in the Dalish style, and precious woodwork crafted by the Elves of Mirkwood. Chief among their prizes though, are the cunning, almost magical toys made by the Dwarves of the Lonely Mountain, and the extraordinary creations of the fire-workers of Dale.

The Gate is Shut

The Company is just arriving to town. Perhaps they are returning from a previous adventure, to enjoy a well-deserved break in a town they know well, or they might even have been called by from an influential patron. Whatever the situation, they are on the Merchants Way, moving with the flow of traders returning to the city.

As the heroes approach the Traders Gate, they notice that the doors are shut and that a large crowd of people is assembling in front of the city walls. Getting closer, the heroes discover that a cart carrying a heavy load of large stone blocks is lying upturned in the middle of the road with a broken wheel. An elderly Dwarf is lying motionless under the cart. From the excited conversation of a dozen Dwarves who are trying to move the broken cart and free the unfortunate fellow, the heroes learn that the accident may have been the consequence of a heated debate between the old merchant and a younger relative, who is now sitting by the side of the road, tearing at his beard in desperation.



To the dismay of the many bystanders, eager to leave or enter Dale, the Traders Gate has been shut, as the City Officials need to see the matter through. Within a few minutes, a dozen City Guards exit the gate leading a team of mules and start to slowly make their way through the assembled crowd to the broken cart: there seems to be no other choice but wait for them to help the Dwarves and free the road. Heroes eager to assist are shooed away – this is 'official business' and 'must be done the right way.'

Patience

The crowd of agitated people waiting for the cart to be removed slowly spreads along the walls of the city, breaking into small groups composed of people coming from the same region. Everyone is complaining, talking excitedly and grumbling about the situation. The same, obvious solutions to the problem are offered multiple times to the City Guards, as they try to patiently navigate the situation.

A large group of Mannish strangers seem to adopt a better, more philosophical answer to the trouble at hand: they all sit down in a circle to the left of the gate, and start making tea on a small campfire; Judging from their garb they all seem to hail from the East. When it becomes obvious that the wait is not going to be brief, other travellers follow their example, and soon several improvised campsites appear at the sides of the road.

Waiting, Waiting...

A half-dozen or so armed companions do not pass unobserved in a crowd of old merchants and young apprentices. Soon, the heroes find themselves the object of many conversations, and the target of multiple questions from the most curious. Many queries concern the security of Wilderland's roads, and a matter of bandits that are said to prowl the trading routes in recent times.

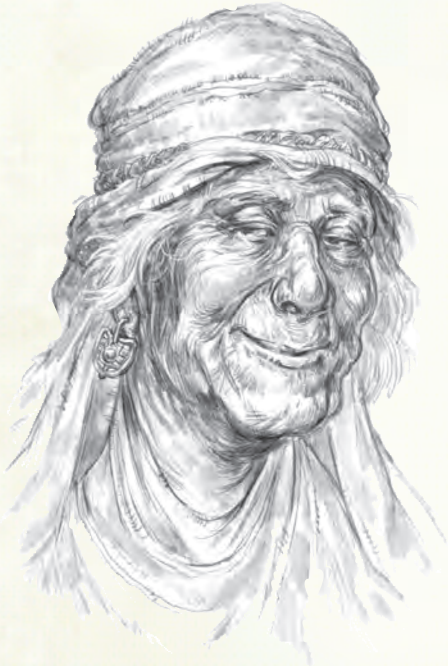
It seems every traveller here has a story about this Bandit-lord, Longo, and his group of vicious Men. The true nature of the bandits remains obscure though, as one rumour often contradicts another. Some say the bandits are half-Orcs, others swear they are Wayward Elves, other merchants even imply that the brigands are likely hiding amongst the travellers stuck outside the city right now!

6 Faces in the Crowd

Amongst the people waiting outside the Traders Gate are a few individuals whom the characters may take note of or have particular interactions with. As the Company is stuck outside for a fair amount of time, the Loremaster may use the following paragraphs to manage the Company's with the various merchants and travellers.

Kelda – Old Craftswoman

Kelda is an older Barding woman, with long grey hair bound in a braid in the style of the Northern Dalemen. She is sitting with her legs crossed, stitching a figure on a small girl's robe, using a slender silver needle and red thread. Under Kelda's expert hands, the stitching soon takes the form of a snake, twisting around the button holes of the child's tunic. The small girl is transfixed, as if watching a magic worker. Kelda lives within the city and is waiting to go home after visiting family in Esgaroth.



Thulim, Nephew of Dulin – Dwarven Mason

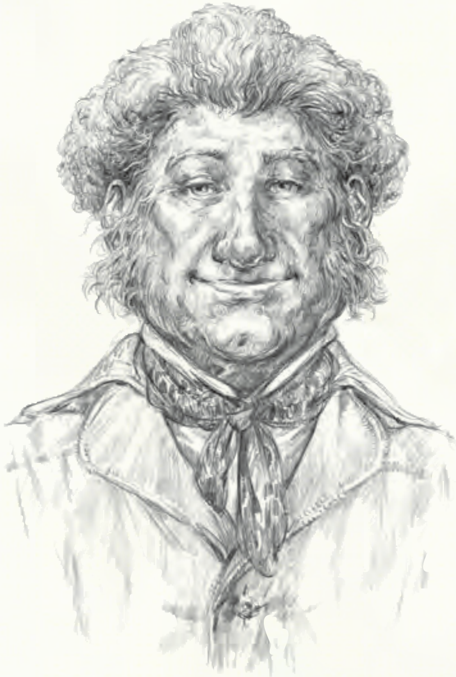
Thulim is the Dwarven mason whose argument with his uncle, Dulin, led to the accident. He is worried out of his wits about his uncle's well-being, and would be extremely grateful if any adventurer does something to help him (he will offer to compensate them with his work). Dulin isn't actually wounded too seriously, but he aims to aggrieve his nephew – when drawn out from under the cart, he is found to have only suffered a few cuts and bruises.

The City Guards

Three members of the City Guard watch the crowd of travellers waiting to enter Dale, telling everyone to wait at the side of the road. They seem annoyed by the situation and tolerate little interference from adventurers and travellers alike.

Clovis – A Hobbit

A Hobbit with a large nose, dark hair, and a full head of greying curls is sharing some of his bread and cheese with a group of travellers, all the while speaking about the troubles on the roads lately. He says his name is Clovis, and he is the first to mention hearing stories about this bandit Longo and his fearsome group.



When asked about himself, Clovis tells quietly of how he was captured by brigands while travelling to Sarn Ford, in distant Eriador. He was lucky to escape with his life. He says he is finally close to returning home, and is currently seeking a caravan heading west, but has travelled enough to be choosy about whom he will give his trust. Clovis has deep set lines hinting at the many troubles he has faced, but has an air of quiet confidence, much like that of a seasoned adventurer.

Katun – Merchant of the Easterlings

The leader of the company of Men from the East is a middle-aged woman, with a youthful smile and penetrating eyes. She offers tea to any travellers who approach her and her group. She patiently waits for the gate to open, urging her companions to do the same.

Idle Chatter

There are many talking while they wait for the Traders Gate to open. Here are some bits of small talk to provide atmosphere.

- *"Kelda is one of the best embroiderers in Dale. Her creations aren't precious in the common sense - she doesn't employ rich fabrics or jewels – but her best work looks almost alive."*
- *"I hear the Dwarves whose cart broke down leaving the city tried to sell their stone at almost double the price of other quarrymen. Only because it was cut by Dwarves!"*
- *"That halfling is so nice. I was feeling unwell and he told me about one of his people's old remedies. I told him to come stay with me anytime he is in Dale again."*
- *"I'm glad I went through the Grey Mountain Narrows. That bandit, Longo, is on the Southern roads and I hear he's been attacking every merchant he encounters!"*
- *"I've got 10 pelts that I need to get inside for curing. I only partially treated them for travel, and if I don't get them on racks soon they'll all spoil!"*
- *"Longo's no threat! I told that halfling over there about the time I faced a talking Spider in the forest. He just chuckled and told me about a time he was with a group that killed four talking Spiders. What a story-teller. Small bodies make tall tales, aye."*
- *"I hear tell that someone brought to town a brandy distilled in Dorwinion that is so sweet, one drop and nothing else will ever taste the same! No thank you! If I ever got to try that, I'd never be satisfied with ale again!"*
- *"If this cart isn't cleared within the hour, the king himself will hear of it! See if those Dwarves ever trade here again! They must be Iron Hill Dwarves. Our Dwarves are far more respectful!"*

The Scuffle

Mixed among the waiting travellers are three Men who are keeping a watch over Kelda, the embroiderer. They are dressed for travelling, with boots and cloaks, and one wears a battered helm. They are waiting for a chance to get to her and rob her of something of worth to them.

The chance arrives when a loud, drawn-out creaking draws all eyes to the gate - the cart is finally being drawn off by the guards and their pack of mules. The wait seems to be over and people make ready to approach the gate, waiting for the moment when the doors will open.

As the crowd gathers closer to the Traders Gate, the skulking Men make their move: they quickly and silently wade through the crowd, reaching Kelda as she is still collecting her belongings. Kelda starts screaming as the attackers grab at her, their swords drawn, apparently trying to take something from her.

If the companions react quickly and rush to the aid of the distressed embroiderer, they find Clovis, the wandering Hobbit, already there brandishing a dagger. He succeeded in chasing the attackers away and the robbers flee, running across the camp of the Easterlings and quickly disappearing.

Aftermath

When the dust settles, the City Guards intervene and disperse the crowd gathering around the spot where the scuffle took place.

Luckily, Kelda has suffered only small bruises from the aggression. If asked, the embroiderer says she is not sure why the bandits attacked her, but they were grabbing for her pouch. The only thing of value are a few luck charms she keeps there, and her tools, like a number of needles - the silken and golden threads she carries in her backpack are much more valuable, she says. Kelda adds that she heard one of the Men say the name of the bandit-leader, Longo, and wonders what he could want from her.

Clovis the Hobbit says that he has heard stories about Longo as well.

"People are always happy to talk to a Hobbit, and many have told me that Longo is an Easterling, but that could just be their taste for the exotic. Some other travellers I spoke with said the bandits came out of the East, but that's just the Upper Marches, certainly not distant Khand! If you seek this Longo out, you'll probably have to start somewhere along the river near there."

If any companion traded friendly words with Katun, she approaches them and confirms that she too heard the attackers saying the name Longo. She adds that she has heard this name many times already, and has heard the rumour about him being an Easterling. Katun seriously doubts this, but she is interested in the reputation of her folk to be cleared: since the companions are adventurers, couldn't they take the matter into their own capable hands, and bring this Longo to justice? Katun could easily persuade many merchants to pay them a reward should they succeed.

The Gate Opens

Finally, the doors of the Traders Gate are pushed open, and the traffic in and out of the city begins to resume in its regularity. Within minutes, only a few burnt branches and discarded foodstuff remain to mark the spots where the waiting merchants set up various improvised campsites.

The companions can now continue into the city, to go about their business and experience the comforts of Dale (the Loremaster may use the material presented in the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*, starting from page 35, to bring the city to life).

Hidden in Plain Sight

The Hobbit going by the name of Clovis is the Bandit-lord Longo, a clever fiend who uses his guile to set up his targets. As the trustworthy-looking Clovis from the Shire he gathers information, then employs it to remove the biggest threats and hurdles, and finally proceeds to seek his prize.

His story of being taken by brigands and escaping is true, and he tells it without claiming any falsehoods. This makes his cover more believable as he digs into his past memories and emotions (a **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** check to observe Clovis reveals nothing but a wary personality that has lived through many unfortunate occurrences). Clovis does truly seek to return to the Shire, but desires to amass a large fortune before doing so.

What he leaves out of his story is that he was born into a well-to-do family of the Southfarthing, the only son of an innkeeper. Always troubled by a rebellious spirit, Longo dreamed of hidden gold and gems, and he was still in his tweens when he decided to leave the Shire. Soon, he fell into a bad company, a ragtag band of big folk and Hobbits, scrounging a meagre living in desolate Eriador out of occasional work and small crimes.

After several years Longo decided he had enough and concocted a lamentable plan: with the help of two Bree-landers he decided to rob his own home in the Shire, succeeding in entering his father's Hobbit-hole and stealing the family jewels and precious heirlooms. Longo and his two partners fled south, but upon reaching Sarn Ford, the Hobbit experienced a moment of clarity and stood frozen in his tracks: he told the two Breemen that he had changed his mind, and ordered them to drop the loot and let him return it. As an answer, the two stabbed him. Longo managed to escape, albeit wounded, and fled north into the Barrow-downs.

Longo recalls only snippets of the nights he spent in the Barrow-downs, bleeding from a wounded leg. He remembers a cold voice, and a colder shadow that fell upon him when he entered a barrow to find shelter from the rain. When he finally stumbled upon the Road to the North the morning after, he was clutching a black dagger sheath, without recollections of how or where he found it.

In time, Longo discovered some of the properties of his 'treasure'. He found that he enjoyed a greater confidence in his own capabilities while wearing the scabbard, and that he could easily influence people, even have them follow and obey him. Unfortunately, he also started to develop an overpowering need to use his newfound power to use others to pursue his own means, and, eventually, to prey upon them.

With a clever mind and the Shadow-tainted scabbard at his side, Longo travelled East, across the Misty Mountains and into Wilderland. There, he gathered around him brigands, robbers and cutthroats of all sorts, Men that could be easily swayed by his ambitions and superior charisma. Under his lead, the bandits have made quite a name for themselves, and eventually came to the attention of the Sorcerer of Forod, who was quick to recognise the potential usefulness of Longo and his men.

Recently, the Nazgûl has sent Longo information that has put him on the tracks of the Silver Needle. The Hobbit has been promised a rich reward for it, something that has made the Bandit-lord very suspicious... so suspicious that he intends to see the artefact and inspect it for its real worth before he hands it to someone else.

TAKING THE BAIT, OR NOT?

If the companions hesitate to go and seek out Longo and his men, a guard may hear of their involvement with the scuffle at the gate and ask for their help. Otherwise, a local patron may ask if they can look into the issue, as Longo's deeds are starting to affect many amongst the people of Dale. If one of the Company is of high enough standing to be seated at the king's table, they may find Bard's young son Bain concerned by tales of this Longo and the menace he presents to travellers.

Should the Company finally take an interest in Longo, they soon hear many people in Dale talk of attacks on the less travelled paths to the south of the city, east of the River Running. Some merchants use these paths in place of taking the Merchants Way or boating down the river to avoid passing through Esgaroth or to return to their homes in the Upper Marches by a more direct way.

There is speculation by some that the bandits have a large camp somewhere there and travel in smaller groups to make their raids.

Longo's Plan

Now that his first attempt at stealing the Silver Needle was interrupted, Longo needs to prepare a new plan and he won't suffer anyone to interfere with it, in particular the companions: his hinting for them to seek out the bandits aims to lead the group into an ambush far from Dale and be rid of them.

The rest of this adventure is presented considering that the companions leave Dale in search of Longo. If the heroes do not take any of the baits that the bandit leader has left for them, then the Loremaster should skip *Part Two* entirely and adapt slightly the text for *Part Three: Thieves in Dale*, and beyond.

The Black Scabbard

Wrought of black steel, light and strong, and set with many fiery stones, this dagger sheath rested long in the shadow under a mound in Tyrn Gorthad. The weaponsmith who crafted it originally bestowed a blessing of Persuasion upon it, to make the orders of a Captain of War resound with superior authority. But the darkness of the barrow has twisted the power wound about it, and when Longo stole it from the mound, a curse fell upon the Hobbit, marking his life forever.

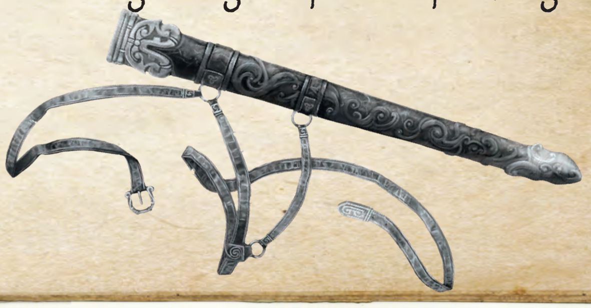
The Blessing

When Longo wears the black scabbard and displays it openly (he keeps his long knife in it) his Charisma is exalted much beyond his stature, and no one can escape the power of his words. The men of his band of brigands almost worship him, and would never think of deserting or betraying him.

If the companions have no reason to doubt 'Clovis', the power of the scabbard manifests by making him appear completely trustworthy – for example, any Insight check yields no alarming clues. Should a player explicitly say they don't trust the Hobbit, then only a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check can reveal that some external power is at work, giving strength to the Hobbit's presence.

The Curse

The Curse of Weakness marring the Black Scabbard has provoked Longo to become Murderous (see *Rivendell Region Guide*, page 102), setting the Hobbit on a downward path into Shadow. When the Sorcerer of Forod arrived in the Dalelands, it was easy for Radbal and Maugor, the Orcs of Dol Guldur (see pages 17 and 23 to enlist Longo among the informants of the Nazgûl.



- PART TWO -
SEARCHING THE ROADS

The Company sets off searching for the bandit camp in the Upper Marches, to the east of the Running River. Considering the relatively short distance, there's no need to invoke the full Journey rules.

But finding the bandits won't be easy. Even by limiting the search to the immediate vicinity of the watercourse there is much ground to cover and the rains of the last few days have made the paths muddy and unpleasant.

- All heroes acting as Scouts or Hunters are allowed two **DC 15** checks each day, using either **Investigation** or **Survival**. With four successes, the companions have found a well-trod path across the wilderness, a trail likely to lead them to the bandit camp (see *The Cold Bog*, below).

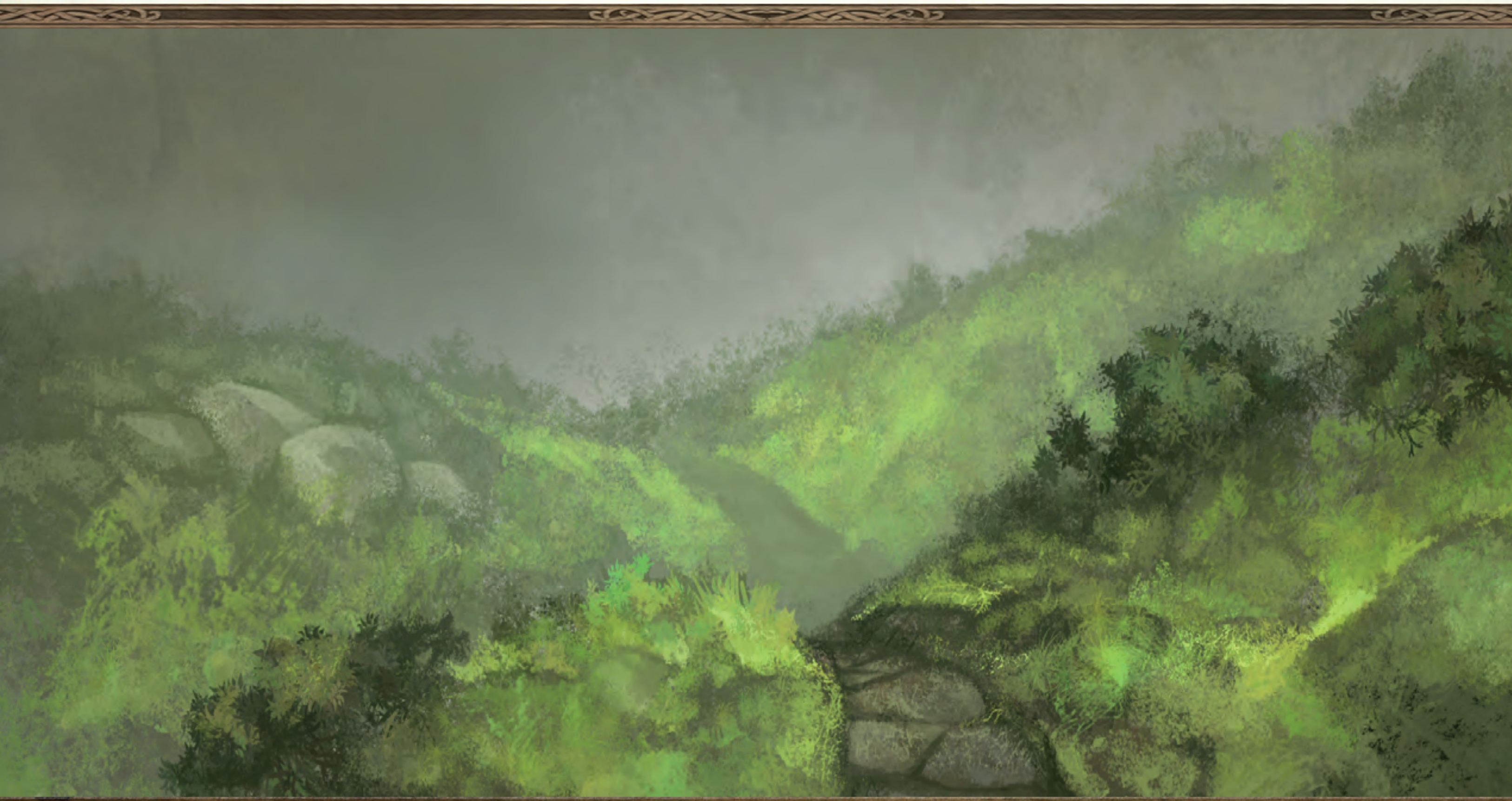
The Company meet few travellers as they search for Longo. When they do, the encounters are rarely pleasant: the travellers seem to have chosen these paths exactly to avoid meeting others and do not show much interest in talking to strangers. Appropriate ability checks and gestures of kindness, such as sharing food, are required to open any traveller up to conversation.

- When this happens, the companions hear again news of Longo and his men: A successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Intelligence (Traditions)** check counts as one of the four required successes to find the right path. From there, they will enter *The Cold Bog,* below.

On the Right Path

Once set upon the right path, the companions' search takes an easterly course, crossing into the western edges of the Upper Marches. Here, they make their way across the open countryside for several miles, until the trail starts leading them south, into a desolate, miry heath, whose eastern side is walled by a rampart of crags. No one lives around here, it seems.

For a while, the tracks lead the companions along a gurgling stream, until its course becomes lost into a wet bog. Now, dry reeds rise among wide fens and mires, and



a thick mist lays in heavy banks, unmoving in the windless hours that precede the setting of the sun.

7 The Cold Bog

The companions have entered a desolate bog, part of the Long Marshes, the main expanse of which lays to the south-west of them. This remote corner of the Dalelands is not the secret refuge of Longo and his men, but it is where a band of Orcs of Dol Guldur have found sanctuary instead. Longo of course knows about the Orcs. Their chieftain, Radbal, is his liaison with the Sorcerer of Forod – the Hobbit has sent the companions right into a well-prepared ambush.

6 Finding the Camp

Marching across the marshy terrain of the bog makes for some slow and uncomfortable exploring. Again, all heroes acting as Scouts or Hunters can make their two daily checks, using **Investigation** or **Survival**, but the difficulty becomes **DC 17**.

The companions find the encampment of the Orcs after two days of searching, in an area where the reeds are thick and the fog lays heavy and cold. It is a narrow stretch of dry land, shielded from view by tall reeds, covered with sparse shrubs and a handful of mossy, skeletal trees. The Orcs are waiting for the heroes to show up.

- How prepared the companions will be to confront the Orc's ambush depends on how many successes they will have achieved so far in exploring the bog.

Ambush!

When the companions get near to the Orc's camp, the Loremaster should ask the players to make a **Wisdom (Perception)** check. The difficulty is determined using the difficulty listed below; Companions who fail their check are Surprised.

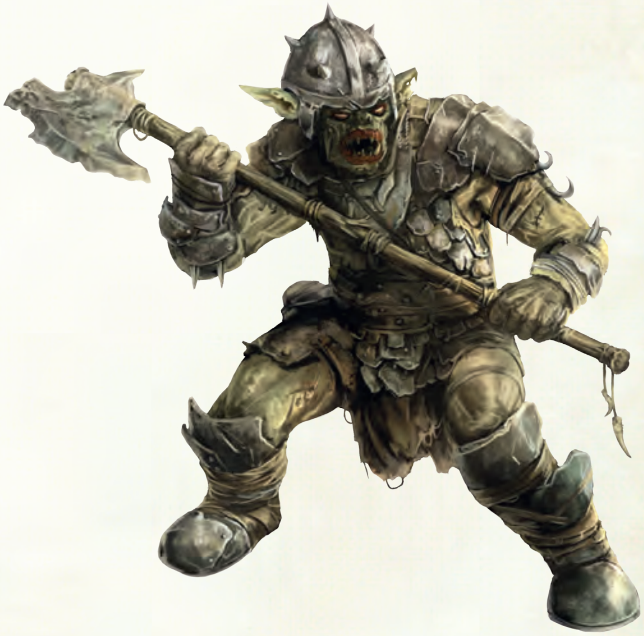
Check the entry corresponding to the number of successes produced while exploring:

- **0-2:** The companions haven't found anything that might tip them off about the ambush and are completely unaware of the coming assault (**DC 20**).
- **3-4:** The heroes are following a trail of tracks (probably those left by the lieutenants of Longo) but have no reason to think they are expected (**DC 18**).
- **5-6**: The companions have found some proof of the presence of Orcs in the bog, and are thus moderately alert (**DC 16**).
- **7+:** The companions have found clear Orc tracks, and thus are alert and ready (**DC 14**).

The Orcs of Dol Guldur

The Orcs from Dol Guldur are not a group of cravenly minions, only ready to do what is commanded of them when whipped. Radbal and his lads have fought together for many long years, and have fought several times against both Elves and Men. They are all hardened veterans, and their captain has felled many a champion with his heavy scimitar.

When they spring their trap, all the Orcs send their spears flying in a single volley. They target each companion at least once, but since there are more Orcs than heroes, they target any Elf or Dwarf multiple times.



Longo's Lieutenants

Longo sent three of his men (Vig, Kasper, and Swain, see page 19) to warn Radbal to expect the Company. If the Loremaster wants a tougher fight, they can join the combat. However, they are expected back in Dale and will flee as soon as the tide of battle turns against the Orcs.

They use secret ways through the marshlands and if the companions wish to follow them it requires 9 successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) checks to track them back to the gates of Dale.

Muddy Sword-work

When the fight at close quarters begins, the companions are still slowly emerging from the clinging mud of the bog, while the Orcs are attacking from firmer ground.

The heroes are considered to be at Disadvantage for this round of combat. If they remain in the bog, use the rules for combat scenery on page 90 of the *Loremaster's Guide*.

Radbal's lads are Orc Guards (*Loremaster's Guide*, page 104), and Radbal is a Great Orc (*Loremaster's Guide*, page 97). There are three Orc Guards for every two companions. Additionally, all the Orcs are **Battle-hardened** – they have Advantage on any saving throws against intimidation effects, and the troupe is also **Skillful** and **Trained** – the Orc Guards have Advantage on Perception checks (and their passive **Perception** is now 18) and their scimitar attacks. Finally, the Orcs will not suffer from their **Sunlight Sensitivity** ability at any hour of the day, as the daylight is obscured by the heavy banks of mist.

The Orcs fight at the best of their abilities, exploiting their **Aggressive** nature with Radbal supporting them from behind using his **Commanding Voice**. If Radbal is killed, all the Orc Guards lose the benefit of their scimitar training (see above).

After the Battle

Either during the battle or afterwards, the Company will learn the true identity of Longo. Before he dies, Radbal curses the Hobbit:

"Longo, that halfling maggot! He set up us very well indeed... he wants the Needle for himself... I hope the Sorcerer gets the fool and freezes the flesh off his back!"

If he doesn't get a chance in the heat of battle, the tough old Orc can spit his curses through clenched teeth as he dies. Longo's treachery was of the more practical sort: no matter who won the fight, a thorn in his side is gone. The 'Sorcerer' is the first hint to the players there is more here than simple banditry.

RETURN TO DALE

Once the Company has dealt with the Orcs they will likely return to Dale as fast as they can, to look for Clovis/Longo, or, if they figured out what's going on, to protect Kelda.

Going straight for Dale in a hurry requires all companions to pass a **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival)** check; heroes failing the check gain a level of Exhaustion on the return trip.

– PART THREE –
THIEVES IN DALE

If the companions left Dale to look for Longo's camp, as they struggle to find their way in the Long Marshes, Longo proceeds with his plan to steal the Silver Needle.

THE CRAFTSWOMAN'S FATE

Kelda lives and works in a house in the Old Quarter of Dale. She sleeps in a room on the first floor of the house, while the ground floor serves as her workshop, an open arched space facing a well-trafficked alley. On any given weekday, Kelda can be seen sitting at her bench working on her creations, with the exception of each Wednesday, when she can be found selling her wares from her stall in the Market-square of Dale.

The night after the departure of the companions from Dale, Longo and his men arrive at Kelda's house after midnight. They silently force their way into the shuttered workshop, and take the Silver Needle. Kelda discovers that the needle is missing the following morning.

The grief provoked by the loss is too much for the old artisan, and she falls into a dark melancholic mood.

THE COMPANIONS RETURN

Tricked by the Hobbit's cunning to leave town, the heroes make their way back to Dale.

The companions have two main choices in front of them: do they go and look for Kelda, as they have realised she is in danger, or do they search for Longo and his hideout?

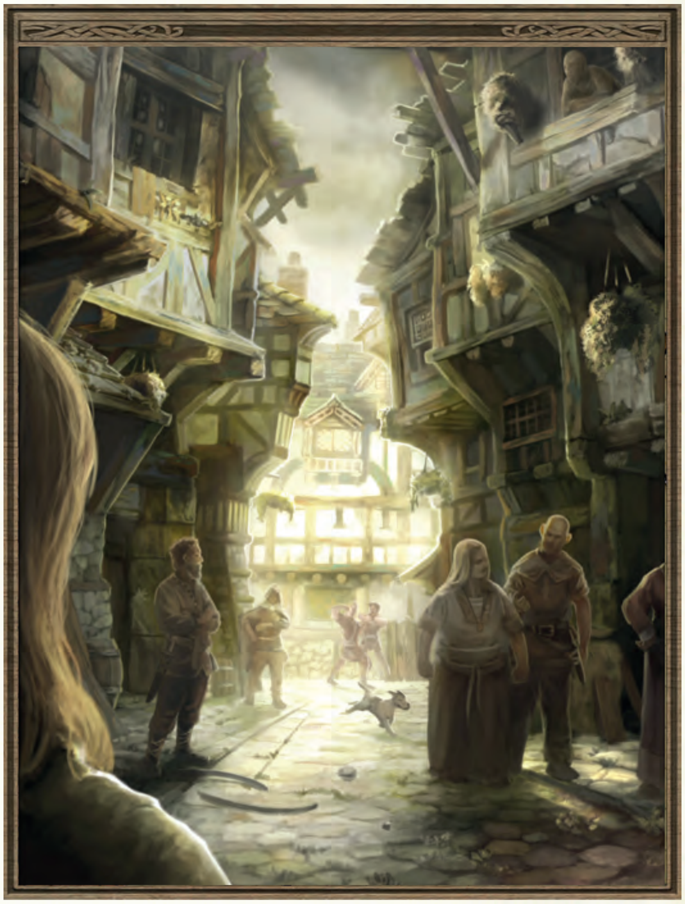
Looking For Kelda

If the companions look for Kelda, they can simply ask about her in town, as many know her as one of the best embroiderers in Dale. Word of the theft spreads rapidly.

When they arrive at her shop in the Old Quarter, they find it closed, its heavy wooden shutters showing clear signs of intrusion. Kelda is actually inside, as the companions may discover if they attempt to enter, or if they wait long enough to hear her moving inside.

When Kelda sees the companions, she recognises them from the episode at the gate of Dale. In tears, the artisan tells her sad story, eventually asking the heroes to leave her alone in her sorrow. She considers her precious needle to be lost, and would rather try to forget it completely than nurture false hopes.

If pressed, Kelda may recount what she knows about the needle (not much, see *The Silver Needle*). A **DC 15 Intelligence** (**Lore** or **Riddle**) check can at least determine from her description that the item must be magical in origin.

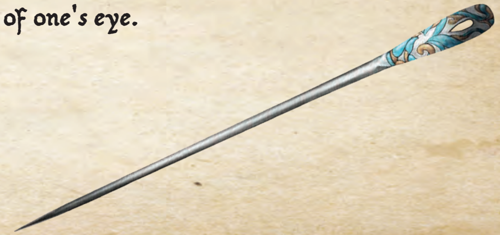


The Silver Needle

The story of the Silver Needle is a very long one, and it is mostly lost. It was made by the Elves long, long ago, but eventually ended up in the treasuries of Erebor, before the coming of Smaug. When the Dragon claimed the Lonely Mountain as his own, the Silver Needle was saved from ruin by a couple of Dwarven clothiers, who were later forced to sell it to some drapers from Lake-town.

In time, the needle changed many hands, in the end becoming a token of love, given by an adoring suitor to a young Kelda. The craftswoman doesn't know the story of the needle, nor does she suspect its worth – all she knows is that she feels as if she was still a young embroiderer when she uses it, as her hand never trembles, and that she is always able to accomplish exactly what she endeavours to create.

When used to sew a garment, or to stitch an embroidery or tapestry, the Silver Needle works into the fabric of the piece the subtle magic of its Elven creators: the cloth retains some of the user's thoughts when it was being sewn, and makes them appear before the eyes of those that look at it, all the while giving to the sewn object a life-like quality: a dress seems to wave and ripple as if moved by a faint breeze, a tapestry evokes the sounds and smells of the image it shows, the embroidery on a cloak seems to shimmer and dance in the corner of one's eye.



Vig, the Spy

Longo's bandits are keeping an eye on Kelda, as Longo wants to be warned in advance if the companions, or anyone else for that matter, goes to the embroiderer asking questions.

If the heroes are keeping a look-out, on a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check they spot a man of dubious intentions whose face they might find familiar: it is Vig, one of Longo's henchmen. If the companions try to approach the spy, he runs, attempting to disappear into the crowd.

Should the companions attempt to seize Vig, the chase is resolved as a prolonged action, requiring 5 successful **DC 17 Athletics** checks (Vig is fast, and the streets are crowded); the first to achieve the five successes is the one to catch Vig. A check that succeeds by 5 or more counts as two successes towards the total. If Vig is taken over, he doesn't try to resist and is easily captured.

- If a companion fails a check, Vig gains ground on the failing companion, and they must spend their next success catching up (it does not count for the total). If a companion fails twice, the hero has lost sight of the spy and is out of the chase.
- If a hero fails with a natural 1, the companion suffers an accident (they run into a passing wheelbarrow and stumble, they take a wrong turn and hit a wall, etc.) and is out of the chase.

If the companions capture Vig, he is found to be a stray Man from the Dalelands, made grim in both countenance and spirit by many years spent in the Wild. Unfortunately for the heroes, he is firmly under the influence of Longo's superior charisma, and will refuse to reveal anything about what he was doing or who sent him.

A companion succeeding at a **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** check gets the impression that Vig has an unnatural fear of something, or someone. Using this information, the hero may attempt to counter the effects of the 'spell' controlling him, by making a **DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation)** check. If the companions snap Vig out of Longo's domination, he breaks down under the sudden realisation of all the wicked things he has done following the Hobbit's orders, and will give away the name and identity of his master: Longo the Hobbit hides in a building in Brokenstone, protected by his band of cutthroats.

Kasper and Swain

If at least some of the companions are busy running after Vig, Kasper and Swain try to make sure their master will have no further trouble from the embroiderer. Profiting from the commotion that a bunch of running adventurers is making in the streets of the Old Quarter, the two minions of Longo set fire to Kelda's apartment, throwing a lantern through a first-floor window.

The fuel from the lantern spreads rapidly, as Kelda keeps a store of her materials upstairs. When the smoke is seen from the street it's too late to save the shop. After a few minutes, the wooden planks of the first floor start to fall blazing onto the ground floor.

If the companions were all busy catching the spy, they will discover the fire only when it's too late. Otherwise,

VIG THE SPY

Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	12 (+1)

Armour Class 18 (Deadly Elusiveness, shield, see below)
Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)
Speed 30 ft

Skills Deception +3, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Westron
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Deadly Elusiveness. If Vig does not wear any armour, his Armour Class is 16.

Sneaking (Recharge 6). Vig can use his bonus action to inflict an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a target he hits with a weapon attack if his target is within 5 feet of Vig's ally.

Actions

Multiattack. Vig makes two attacks with his short sword.

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft or range 20/60 ft, one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage or 4 (1d8) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

they may at least rescue Kelda – the old embroiderer is desperately trying to save her life's work, exposing herself to the flames.

Running in and out of the burning building exposes a hero to the fire for at least 3 rounds, causing 1d4+4 points of fire damage each round, and the hero must make a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or gain a level Exhaustion from the smoke. A hero that makes a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check finds Kelda and a successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** check allows a companion to carry her out of the building the next round. If the old embroiderer is saved, she collapses in the arms of the adventurer that rescued her: with her precious needle lost and her shop destroyed, she is utterly broken.

Searching For Longo

The companions may have discovered where Longo is hiding from the confession of his henchman Vig, but if the brigand wasn't captured, the companions have another way to get that vital information, as a Hobbit is not yet a familiar sight in Dale.

The best way to conduct such an investigation is probably at the Market Square and its surroundings. The people sell their wares here, their customers coming from all across town. The square is also the best place to gossip.

- Finding information about Longo in the Market Square requires a total of 8 successes. The investigation is best suited to skills like **Insight, Persuasion, Riddle** and **Traditions**. Each companion is allowed two checks per day.

- The difficulty of all checks is **DC 17**, as Longo has proven extremely proficient in spreading false clues about himself all over Dale, and the powers of his scabbard have made his lies all the more believable. A check that succeeds by 5 or more counts as 2 successes toward the total.

Reduce the number of checks required for each of the following elements contributing to the heroes' reputation:

KASPER THE BANDIT

Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Armour Class 16 (Ring-mail, shield)
Hit Points 39 (6d8+12)
Speed 30 ft

Skills Intimidation +3, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Westron
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. Kasper makes two attacks with his axe.
Axe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.
Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft or range 20/60 ft, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage or 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.
Battle Cry (1/day). Kasper may use his action to activate this ability. Each ally within 30 feet of him gains advantage on attack rolls until the start of Kasper's next turn. He may then make one attack as a bonus action.

SWAIN THE ENFORCER

Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)

Armour Class 16 (Corslet of mail, shield)
Hit Points 38 (7d8+7)
Speed 30 ft

Skills Deception +3, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Westron
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. Swain makes two attacks with his short sword.
Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.
Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft or range 20/60 ft, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage or 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack

Reactions

Great Might (Recharge 5-6). Swain reduces the damage of one weapon attack that hits him by 4, to a minimum 1 point of damage

- The heroes saved Kelda from the fire (-1).
- The Company captured Vig, but cannot break Longo's control over him (-1).
- At least one companion has a Dalish title or a holding in Dale (-1).

When the heroes achieve the total number of successes, they figure out the general whereabouts of the bandits' lair: a building in Brokenstone, in the Old Quarter of Dale.

Playing the Investigation

Achieving 8 successes will probably take a few days of investigation. The Loremaster can use the following paragraphs to colour the interaction of the players with the townsfolk.

- Lissa is the youngest daughter of a smith. She has seen Clovis and talked with him until the Hobbit became annoyed with her many questions. He still gave her a piece of sweet bread and asked her about Kelda.
- An unusually talkative Dwarf named Donar is convinced that the Hobbit has some clandestine dealings in the Old Quarter.
- Gudrun washes clothes all day and gossips with (and about) everyone. She loves talking and saw the Hobbit many times. Once, she overheard the Hobbit say something about "the barracks".
- Olyia is a member of Katun's group of merchants. She has been looking for a place to use as a warehouse in the Old Quarter when she was chased away from a building by some men after she thought she heard some wild beast's grunting!

Tipping off Longo

If Vig hasn't been captured by the companions and the embroiderer's shop has been burned down, Longo is probably feeling rather safe from the companions. This doesn't mean he is not paying attention:

- If the companions roll a natural 1 while looking for information about Longo, they alert some of the spies the Hobbit has planted all over town.

If this happens, the Hobbit will be ready for them when they come to get him in his lair in the Old Quarter (see page 25).

- PART FOUR -
THE BANDITS' LAIR

When the companions find themselves armed with precise information about where Longo is hiding, it is time to take action and try to put an end to Longo's misdeeds.

Will the heroes attempt to *denounce Longo to King Bard*, or will they intervene personally, *going to Longo's Lair?*

DENOUNCING LONGO TO KING BARD

The most natural course of action is probably going to the authorities. Dale is a civilised town, not a forsaken village lost in the Wilderland. How better to deal with a band of brigands hiding in the middle of a populated area than calling for the City Guard to intervene?

If the companions go to the Royal Palace of Dale to meet the king they do not find him. They are received by one of his advisors instead, as King Bard leaves all matters concerning public order in the hands of other courtiers.

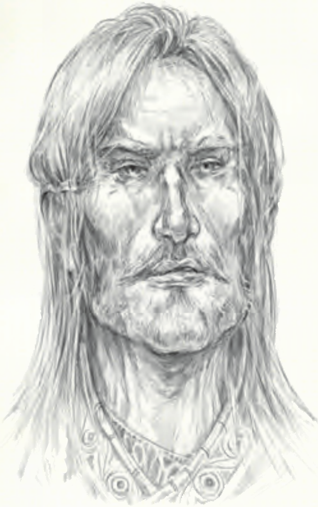
Enter Lord Hakon

The advisor meeting the heroes is Hakon, a sombre nobleman that seems to have more pressing matters than listening to adventurers requesting his help to solve some trouble with brigands. He listens impatiently to what the companions have to say, all the while writing something on a piece of parchment. The companions finally receive his attention when they mention Longo and his presence in town.

King Bard in 2957

Following the events narrated in The Darkening of Mirkwood, King Bard suffered the tragic loss of his Queen in the year 2956. Accordingly, in the years following, King Bard is often absent in body or spirit as he grieves. He leaves everyday decisions to his counsellors. If you are not considering those events as canon, then simply have Bard away on a diplomatic mission to the Elves, or out hunting in the Dalelands.

Unfortunately for the companions, Lord Hakon is a plotting conspirator, furthering many personal concerns at the expense of the common good (see page 6, and his description in the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*, page 61). He is well aware of the activities of Longo, and it is against his best interests to see the Hobbit behind bars.



So, when the name of Longo is mentioned, Hakon pretends to be snapped out of his impatience, feigning surprise and horror at the description of Longo's misdeeds, and by the end of the meeting he promises to send in the guards as soon as possible. In truth, he will first warn Longo of the imminent incursion, allowing the Hobbit to escape. The dastardly Bandit-lord will leave a half dozen of his men behind, to lend credibility to Hakon's action.

Playing Hakon

To avoid giving Hakon's double-dealing away to the players, the Loremaster should set up an Audience with him using the usual rules, pretending to take the heroes' words into account. In truth, nothing will affect the result.

Hakon gives the appearance of taking the Company's concerns seriously and is a Barding nobleman in his late forties, with long hair, dressing in the finest silks. (Lord Hakon will return in **Of Hammers** and **Anvils, To Dungeons Deep and Shadows in the North**.)

Is the Adventure Over?

If the companions let Hakon take the matter in his own hands, the adventure is basically over: Longo will leave Dale with his life and the Silver Needle.

Perhaps something in Lord Hakon's behaviour will tip the players off, or at least make them doubt his competence. For example, they might notice that Hakon doesn't immediately call for the guards to intervene, but simply promises to do so 'at the earliest convenience'. Should they keep watch over the Royal Palace after the meeting with Hakon, the heroes will see that no courier is dispatched to bring any message to the City Guard headquarters. If the heroes smell something fishy, they will still be in time to anticipate the actions of the City Guard, especially because Hakon is delaying their intervention on purpose. If the circumstances allow it, the Loremaster could let the companions arrive just as Longo is finally preparing to leave his hideout.

Longo's Lair

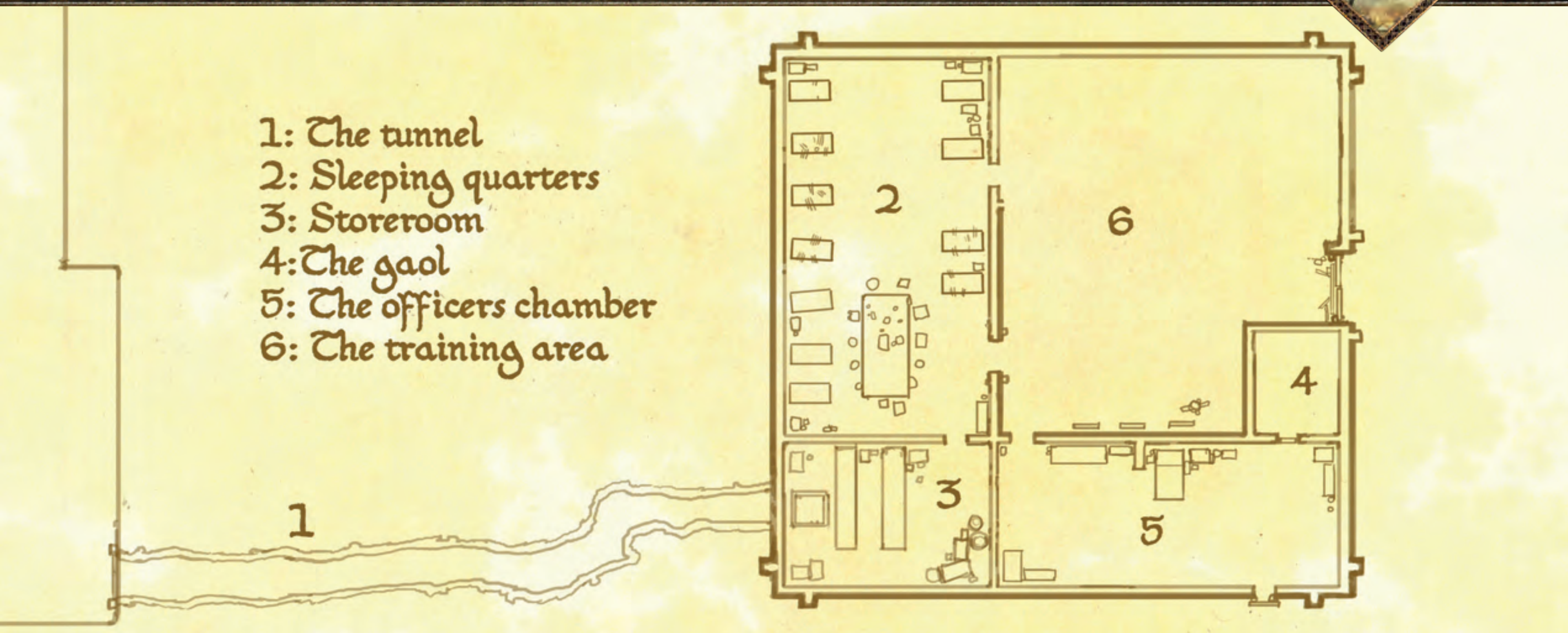
The portion of Dale nearest the river, to the east is known as the Old Quarter. It was built over the ruins of the old Dale, and the majority of its buildings have been erected using stonework from the palaces and houses that Smaug reduced to rubble. The result is a mixture of old and new.

The southernmost part of the Old Quarter is a maze of twisting alleys and close-spaced buildings. Here the air is less wholesome, and it is hard not to get lost, even for a citizen of Dale. It is no coincidence that the majority of the town businesses of the least savoury type are found here: this area is what is known to some as the 'Brokenstone', the black market of Dale.

The Shadows of Brokenstone

To get to Longo's lair the companions must enter the Brokenstone. The place they are looking for is an abandoned barracks building, somewhere in the proximity of the canal on the southern border of the Old Quarter.

The inhabitants of the Brokenstone are a suspicious lot and are generally wary of any "outsider" trespassing, but even the most daring among them would never try something against a group of fully-armed adventurers. But if the heroes simply march through the alleys without concealing their intentions in any way, they will be noticed by some of Longo's men, on the look-out for any intruder. Whether or not Hakon was consulted by the Company, the Hobbit is warned of the coming of the adventurers within minutes (any hero with **a passive Perception of 15 or higher** will notice several individuals that seem to be keeping an eye on them).



Searching

If the companions enter the Old Quarter with a fairly precise idea of where Longo is hiding (they captured Vig and convinced him to talk, or they gathered enough information in the Market Square), it doesn't take much time for them to locate the old guard barracks.

If, on the contrary, they haven't yet pinpointed the whereabouts of Longo's lair, they can still find the villain by succeeding at a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check and a **DC 15 Intelligence (Riddle)** check to find their way to his hideout.

The Barracks

The bandits' lair was once a barracks building used by the City Guard, in the south-eastern section of Brokenstone, a mere few blocks from the Quays. It is a large square building, with a central open area originally used by the guards to train. It appears abandoned, and the entry gate is boarded up. Longo and his men go in and out of the barracks using an underground passage that leads to an opening along the quays of a canal running south of the building.

There are 12 Bandits (or 3 for each hero) along with Longo. To enter the building the companions have two options: breaking in from the entry gates, or sneak along the underground tunnel from the canal.

Orcs in Dale!

Maugor is a Great Orc from Dol Guldur like Radbal. In the last few weeks, Maugor has acted as a liaison between Longo and Radbal, all the while keeping an eye on the Hobbit. He entered the town by the river, and then hid in the barracks. The Orc doesn't know that Longo manoeuvred the companions to kill off Radbal and keep the Silver Needle for himself, and is a loyal ally to the Hobbit (thanks to the influence of Longo's cursed scabbard).

When the companions show up, Maugor bides his time and hides, until he finds the right moment to attack the companions – possibly, attacking one of them by surprise when Longo tries to subdue them thanks to his cursed scabbard (see *The Final Confrontation* below).

Smashing Down the Doors

If they want to enter the barracks without any further ado, the companions have no other choice than smash the boarded-up double doors leading to the training area. Alerted by the noise, the bandits inside will rapidly gather to confront them, to buy some time for Longo to make his escape.

- The Bandits will first unleash a volley of arrows, and then charge across the training grounds. If they are not defeated within three rounds of combat, Longo will escape from the window of the Officers Chamber.

1: The Tunnel

With enough information, or with a thorough scouting of the area, the companions may have located the canal entry instead. The round passage is reached by walking along the canal quay, and is barred by a locked iron grate. If the grate is opened by picking the lock **(a DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools)** check), the companions may quietly crawl into the tunnel to emerge in the storeroom.

- If they emerge from the storeroom, the Bandits are taken by surprise. First, three of them show up (with perhaps Swain or Kasper among them), and the rest arrive only after three rounds of combat. If the first three Bandits are defeated before the others join them, the companions have a chance to get to the Officers Chamber before Longo leaves.

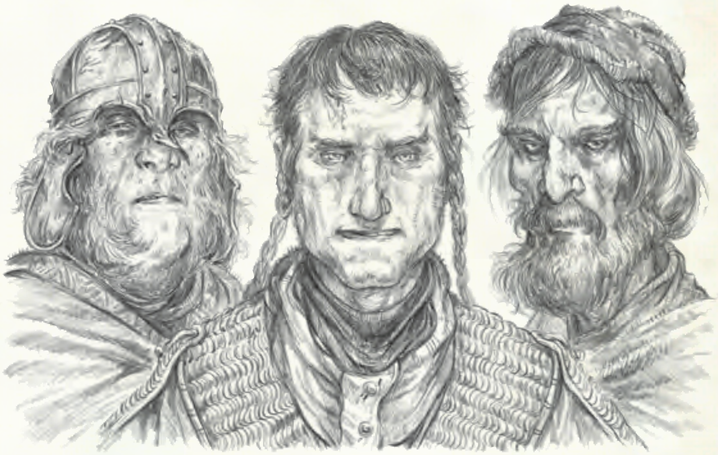
2: Sleeping Quarters A large, empty room that used to house the benches where the soldiers slept. The bandits sleep here, on the floor. A long table is set here for the brigands to eat.

3: Storeroom A storage room filled with rotten and cracked wooden barrels and a tipped-over shelf of wine jugs. The narrow walking space between the two rows of barrels is covered in debris and wood splinters. A wooden trapdoor opens behind a row of barrels leading to the exit tunnel.

4: The Gaol A small chamber, accessed by a single doorway, barred by a heavy wooden gate. Maugor sleeps here.

5: The Officers Chamber This is Longo's private quarters. The chamber is protected by a reinforced door, and has a window facing out. The window is boarded from the outside, but Longo has loosened the boards to make sure he can easily break through them, in case he needs to make a quick exit from the building. The Hobbit keeps his belongings here, including the Silver Needle.

6: The Training Area The wide, open area in the middle of the building has a dirt floor, and two rows of sturdy poles planted in the ground for sparring exercises, and a number of archery targets against the eastern wall.



LONGO'S TRUSTED BANDITS

Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Armour Class 14 (Leather Corslet)
Hit Points 18 (4d8)
Speed 30 ft

Skills Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Westron
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

No Quarter. When the Bandit reduces an enemy to 0 hit points that enemy is considered to already have failed one death save.

Thrall (Longo). Under the influence of the scabbard, the bandits will do anything for Longo. If Longo is within the Bandit's movement speed, the Bandit can use its reaction to become the target of an attack that would have hit Longo. If Longo is slain, the Bandit flees the battlefield.

Actions

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Short Bow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

8 The Final Confrontation

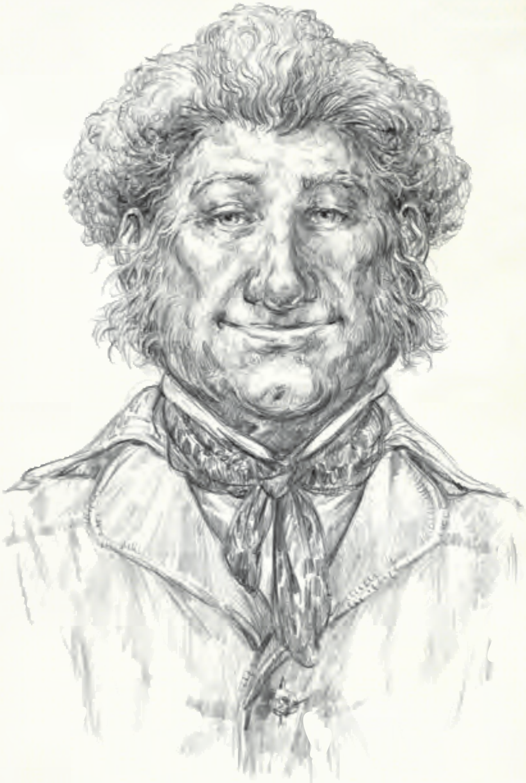
If Longo's men are dealt with swiftly enough, the companions can face the bandit leader himself. His back to the wall, Longo tries to play his best hand yet.

When the companions approach the door of the Officers Chamber, Longo opens it, presenting himself to the armed companions with a kind and serene look on his face:

"Well?" says the Hobbit, *"Why have you come to me with such an aggressive disposition. If you tell me what it is that you want from me, I am sure we can come to an agreement."*

His voice is clear and musical, his tone benevolent. Longo is of course wearing the Black Scabbard, and his left hand is laid casually on his waist, to reveal it to everyone who is looking at him.

While appearing relaxed, the Hobbit is bending his will with all his force to swaying the companions' intentions and force them to come to a peaceful agreement. (He is attempting his Spell of the Scabbard, see below).



LONGO

Small Hobbit

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)

Armour Class 15 (Leather Corslet)
Hit Points 44 (8d8+8)
Speed 25 ft

Skills Perception +5, Persuasion +6, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Westron
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Expert. Longo doubles his Proficiency Bonus for his Sleight of Hand and Stealth (included above).

Inoffensive. While Longo has the scabbard he seems to not be a threat to anyone. Any creature that attacks him has Disadvantage on their attack rolls.

Mesmerise. Longo may use his action to brandish the scabbard at one target creature, who must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, the target becomes Charmed until Longo leaves the area or attacks the Charmed creature.

Spell of the Scabbard (1/day). Longo can focus on the Black Scabbard and attempt to curse any number of creatures within 120 feet of him. Each creature must make a **DC 15 Charisma** saving throw. On a success, the creature gains a point of Shadow but is free to act. On a failure, the creature gains a point of Shadow and is Incapacitated. At the end of its turn, the creature makes another **DC 15 Charisma** saving throw, ending the effect on a success.

Actions

Multiattack. Longo makes two attacks with either his short sword or short bow.

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Short Bow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. If Longo is hit by an attack and can see the attacker, he may halve that attack's damage.

- Epilogue -

If Longo is defeated and captured alive, the Company may bring the Hobbit before an official of Dale for judgement. Deprived of the Black Scabbard (it will have been taken from him, together with every weapon and his belongings) Longo soon breaks and confesses his many crimes, pleading guilty and appealing to the mercy of the court. But the Hobbit has committed too many misdeeds to be pardoned, and will likely be imprisoned for the rest of his days. If Longo was killed and evidence that he was behind the attacks is presented, the city official has a hard time believing a Hobbit was Longo the Bandit-lord, but anyone with a high standing in Dale can make a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check to convince the official of the truth.

Katun will personally thank the companions and provide each of them gifts equal to 5g if they were friendly to her. If a patron set them on their path, the patron instead provides the reward and thanks the companions for making the roads safe for travellers and ending the cruel time of Longo the Bandit-lord.

Kelda, if alive, is grateful to the Company and bids them take the Silver Needle: she senses that her time with the artefact has passed and all she wants now is quiet rest. But the wondrous artefact won't remain in their hands for long...

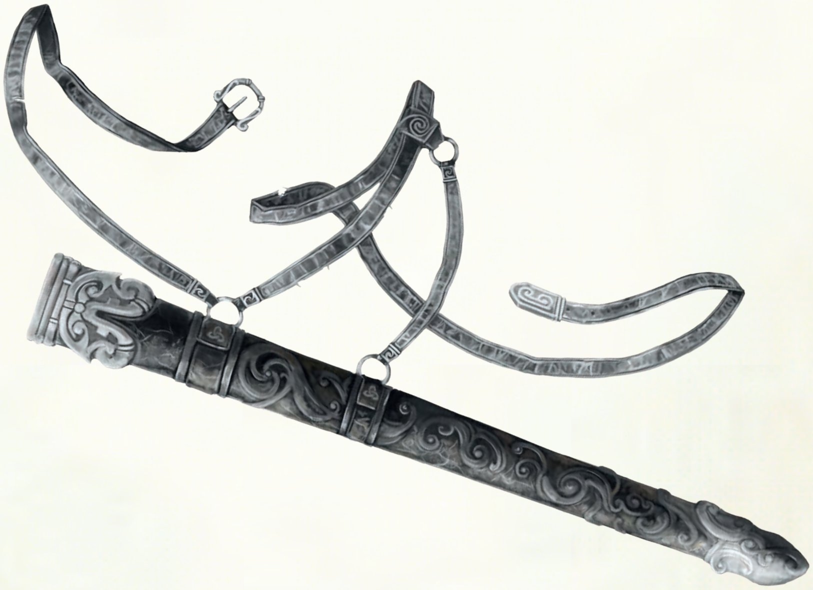
Just before the companions decide on the fate of the Silver Needle, an envoy of the Elvenking arrives (or he comes himself). The Silver Needle once belonged to Celebrían, daughter of Celeborn and Galadriel, and wife to Elrond. Celebrían used it almost three thousand years ago to embroider the woven cloth she gave to Elrond on their wedding day, now hung above the high table of the Great Hall of Rivendell (see *Rivendell Region Guide*, page 9).

The messenger will make it clear that the Elves would like to have the Silver Needle back, for Arwen Evenstar, daughter of Elrond, in particular desires to have an heirloom of her mother. (Perhaps, years later, Arwen will use it to sew and embroider the banner that Aragorn will unfurl upon the fields of Pelennor).

What About the Black Scabbard?

The artefact itself can be destroyed by physical blows; however this does not end the curse. The sheath or handle of the weapon used to destroy the artefact darkens, eventually turning black and gaining the powers of the Black Scabbard, affecting its wielder in the same way as it once worked on Longo.

To truly destroy the dark essence within, the item must be melted down in a fire that burns very hot indeed. The Dwarves of the Iron Hills have an ancient smelter that might do the job. Dragon-fire would certainly work.



-Of Hammers- and Anvils

For Heroes of Level 7 or 8

- **When:** The adventure is set in the summer or autumn of the year 2958.
- **Where:** The majority of the adventure is set in Dale, before briefly moving into the Northern Dalelands and finally ending in Erebor.
- **What:** The Company assist the famed Dwarf Balin in investigating a number of troubling events and rumours disturbing the peace of Erebor and Dale.
- **Why**: A once-famous Dwarven craftsman fallen from grace will stop at nothing to reclaim his "stolen" glory. To restore the prestige he craves, even the death of many Dwarves and serious harm to Erebor would be acceptable.
- **Who**: Balin, son of Fundin, famed companion of Thorin Oakenshield on the Quest of Erebor is the Company's patron for the adventure. Niping of the Iron Hills conspires against the Kingdom under the Mountain, with the help of Gunvar, a Barding petty-lord.
- **Themes:** The Sorcerer uses internal conflicts amidst the Dwarves to begin sowing dissent in both kingdoms.

Adventuring Phase

This adventure is divided into six parts.

Part One - Like the Falling of Small Stones

Balin is rescued by the companions on the road to Dale. A group of men attacked him and his guards, and then left aboard a strange-looking boat along the river.

Part Two - A Grim Toy-market

While in Dale, the Company learns that Balin has apparently been murdered in a second, successful attempt on his life. More troubling rumours and events taint the festive atmosphere of the Toy-market.

Part Three - Uphill and Down Dale

The alive-but-in-hiding Balin engages the Company to make inquiries in Dale about the mysterious events of the last few days. The heroes may find the first evidence of a conspiracy.

Part Four - An Interested Lord

The Company's enquiries bring them to the attention of Gunvar, a lord of the Dalelands. He invites them to his manor where he attempts to persuade them to join him. Either acceptance or refusal lead to complications.

Part Five - In Deep Places

Gunvar's men slip through the roots of the Mountain to sabotage the Dwarven furnaces. The Company must follow them into the depths in order to stop them.

Part Six - Treachery & Wisdom

If the conspiracy is neutralised, the companions are triumphant. Balin returns to shed light on the dark plots woven in the depths of Erebor.

Epilogue

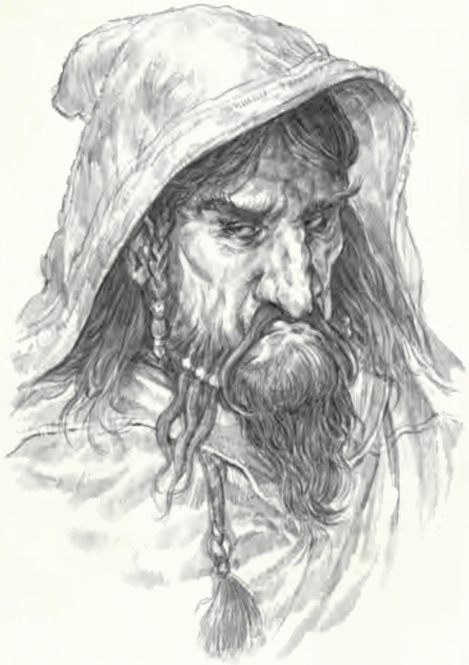
The companions are rewarded for their loyalty to Balin.

The Doom of Niping the Smith

When Dáin, son of Náin, was not yet King under the Mountain, but still simply the Lord of the Iron Hills, Niping the smith's art of making mining tools, delving engines, and devices was considered unmatched. More than that, his work was vital to the life of the Dwarven community, and Niping and his apprentices walked as lords among their peers. No rock was hard enough for his thrice-tempered picks and hammers, they said, no vein too deep.

With the refounding of the kingdom of Erebor and the recovery of the treasure that the Dragon stole, Niping saw his fame stripped away from him. Made rich and complacent, the Dwarves turned their heads away from the mines and furnaces of the Iron Hills, moving to the Lonely Mountain to dedicate themselves to trifling matters, like toy and jewel-making. The name of the once-celebrated smith sank into obscurity.

Year after year, the smith's resentment has grown, especially after making the acquaintance of Lord Hakon, a Barding noble who also saw his star sink below the horizon with the refounding of Dale. For his own reasons, the treacherous courtier has fed the embers of Niping's discontent with crooked words and unscrupulous counsel. Bitterness has turned to anger, rancour to hatred, and a dark plan has started to form in Niping's mind: If he and his art cannot reclaim their rightful position in the eyes of Durin's Folk, no one will. Niping would rather see the works of Erebor broken, its furnaces wrecked, than die forgotten in his cold mines.



Niping's Schemes

Today, the Dwarf-smith blames his current misfortune on the peace that Bard the Dragonslayer and King Dáin Ironfoot forged between the Dwarves and the Bardings. Niping is convinced that were the Dwarves still clinging to their ancestral lifestyle, they would have never forsaken their traditions to embrace their current foolish pursuits.

To see his art be awarded the recognition it deserves once again, Niping has set to mind to weaken and then sever the ties of friendship that unite Bard and Dáin. In the last few years, Niping has dedicated himself to building a loyal following among his fellow Dwarves of the Iron Hills, some of which have become his agents. Inside the Mountain, Gundri and Sígar of the 'Stone Guard' also resent the importance of Dale and listen to the agents of Niping.

In Dale, Dwarven merchants owing their allegiance to Niping have arranged lucrative trades with petty lords, securing the support of a number of greedy Bardings. Thanks to Hakon's intercession, Lord Gunvar of Ashbrook has become Niping's right-hand man, allowing the scheming Dwarf to act without fear of being held responsible.

– PART ONE –
LIKE THE FALLING OF SMALL STONES

The adventure finds the companions travelling to Dale along the Merchant's Way, where it parallels the River Running, before it flows into the Long Lake to the south. It is late in the day, and they are still a few miles south of town, pushing themselves to make the city and its lodgings.

They might be going to Dale on personal affairs, for example to check out the rumours that have the markets flowing with the most exotic goods of late. In particular, stories abound of rare and prestigious wares brought from the East by many merchants who arrived last year.

THE BOAT

1

As they arrive in sight of the river from behind a sheltering hill, the companions spy a craft silently moving with the favour of the current, partially hidden by a mist rising from the river's surface. The heroes take notice of it as it is relatively unusual to see a southbound boat this late in the day, as it won't likely make it to Lake-town before sundown.

The boat is a large skiff, with eight rear-facing oarsmen; If a player proposes it, a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Lore)** check indicates that the boat looks similar to vessels built in Lake-town, if it wasn't for a large pair of eyes painted on the lower sides of its prow. A **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check notices also that the boat is manoeuvred using an unusually large steerboard (rudder), one that could belong to a small longboat.

Should the companions hail the boatmen, they receive no answer. As the boat moves opposite to the Company, it disappears behind them as quickly as it made its appearance. If a companion attempts to follow it, the craft soon gains distance, as it moves with the current.

7 The Raven

Half a mile north from where they saw the passing boat, the companions have a strange meeting: a raven perched on a tree to the side of the road attracts their attention, croaking and flapping its wings. When the companions approach the raven, it takes flight, only to land a few yards away from the road. Should the companions follow, the bird takes flight again, until it lands on a rocky outcrop, about fifty yards away.

Reaching the outcrop, the companions arrive at the edge of a deep cleft, a narrow ravine filled with dense vegetation. A hero succeeding on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check sees the body of a Dwarf at the bottom of the ravine, half buried in thick and thorny bushes: someone has fallen over the edge.

Climbing down the steep slope requires a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** check (the fall is 12 feet high). As they climb down, the companions start hearing a moaning sound: the Dwarf is alive!

Balin

The heroes help recover the fallen Dwarf alive. He looks exhausted, and bleeds from a superficial cut to the side of his head. After a few minutes, he appears to regain his composure: the rescued Dwarf is none other than the famed Balin, son of Fundin, companion of Thorin Oakenshield on the great Quest for Erebor.

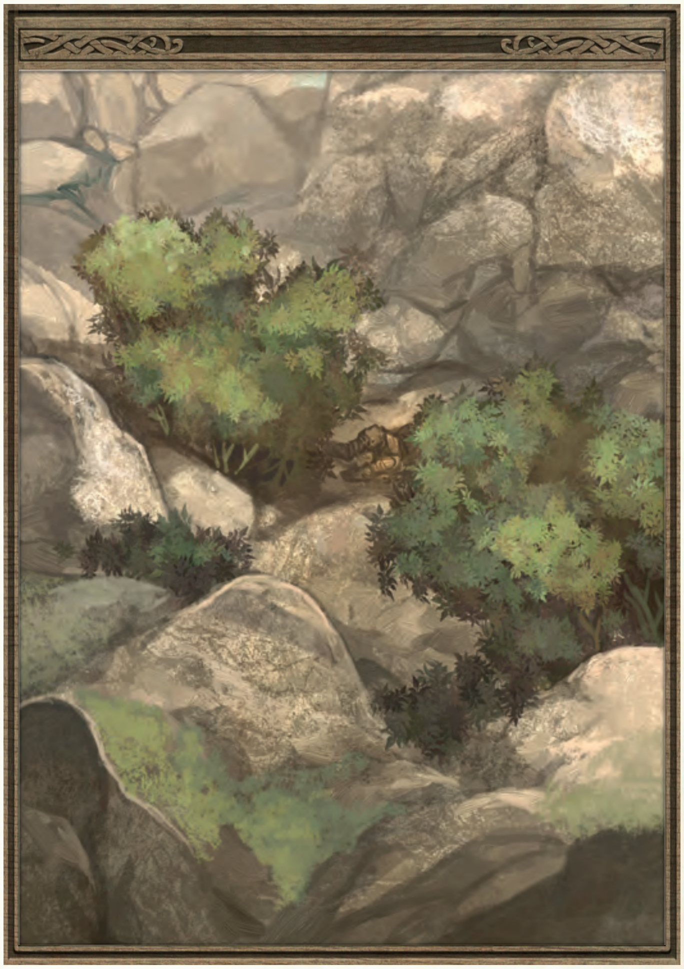
"We were heading for Lake-town, me, my squire, and a bodyguard. They ambushed us on the road... a dozen ruffians. Men, all of them. Storr, the bodyguard, was the first to fall, pierced by a spear. My squire charged to engage them, urging me to escape."

"I fled, but they shot arrows at me. Many darts hit their mark, but I have a thicker skin than most Dwarves..." Balin opens his tunic to reveal a shiny corslet of close-set silver rings. "When I fell over the cliff edge they must have thought I was dead."

It is possible that the companions already know Balin, as he is a prominent personality of the kingdom of Erebor (see page 24 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide* for more on Balin). If the heroes have met him before, Balin is overly delighted to see the companions once more, shaking his head at the wonder of it.

"You seem destined to be my friends at need, it seems. As good in a pinch as a Hobbit I know!"

If the Company has never met him before, due to the circumstances Balin is certainly inclined to view them favourably anyway. Moreover, any past help that the Company has rendered to Durin's Folk or the people of Dale will of a certain be well known to him, as he sits on the King's Council of Erebor and often acts as an emissary for Dáin.



What Happened

Upon returning to the road, the companions can reconstruct what happened to Balin. The shaken Dwarf retraces his steps, and leads the heroes to the place where the fight with the ruffians took place. There are no bodies left on the ground, and it is easy to assume that the assailants must have dragged them away.

If the companions succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival)** check, they find a series of tracks leading away from the road in the direction of the river. The tracks end at a shingly shore, where deep grooves on the riverside indicate that a boat was recently dragged on dry land: The ruffians must have been aboard the boat that the companions saw sailing past them.

7 Words on the Road

The companions must be on their way soon, if they want to reach Dale before the setting of the sun. Balin announces that he wishes to go with them, forfeiting his trip to Esgaroth; he thanks the companions for any assistance they will provide him (a spare pony, a place on the saddle behind another rider, etc.).

On the way back, Balin doesn't add much to what he said so far. He notes sorrowfully that he will have to pass on word of the deaths of his travelling companions, and that he will complain with King Bard about the safety of his roads. No matter how highly Balin thinks of the Company, he won't give additional details about what he was really up to here (see *Dark Business*, page 32); if asked, he will just shake his head muttering, *"old Dwarvish business"* and say no more.

Instead, Balin asks about the Company's doings of late, how they feel about the current events in Dale, and in Wilderland at large. He is keenly interested in the companions' past deeds, asking for accurate descriptions. The Loremaster should encourage the players to reinforce their narrative with **DC 15** ability checks, for example using skills like **Performance, Persuasion or Traditions.**

- This is not just idle curiosity: Balin is assessing the Company's worth, their motives, trustworthiness, and competence. The Loremaster should note the number of successes the Company produces on any ability checks during their talk with Balin, and set them aside until the end of the next part of the adventure.

At Traders Gate, the old Dwarf takes his leave and bids farewell to the companions. With a wink, he says *"You might hear disturbing news soon enough. Seek out my friend Thrun at the Toy-market once you do."*

– Part Two –
A Grim Toy-market

The next Monday after the arrival of the companions in Dale is the first Monday of the month, and, as it is customary in town, it will be Toy-market Day. Rumour has it that this one will be particularly splendid, as a score of wonderful new toys will be presented to the public, and a good number of new merchants, including many foreigners bearing rare and exciting goods, are supposed to be in attendance. Companions in town should not miss the chance to visit the market that is called the "Wonder of the North".

Dark Tidings

Heroes walking around town on Toy-market Day soon realise that something is wrong. Many Dwarf crafters and traders encountered along the streets seem troubled. In the Market Square in particular, long faces abound. Even as they call out their wares, hawkers' voices lack the usual gusto, and the normally exuberant sounds of delighted children are somewhat muted. Many armed guards can be seen on the corners of the square, and moving through the crowd.

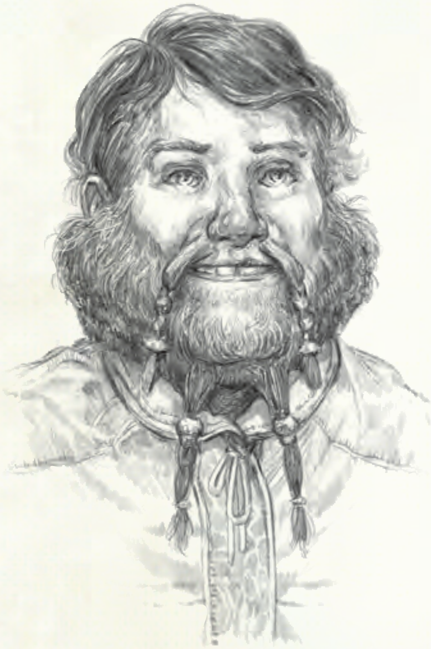
Questioning any of the passers-by, the companions discover the reason for such doom and gloom: word on the streets is that Balin, son of Fundin, emissary and advisor to King Dáin, died the night before, a victim of murder! This is not a case of confusion about the occasion the Company aided Balin. This is a new attack, Balin being slain in Dale itself, so soon after surviving the previous attempt on his life.

The atmosphere is (unsurprisingly) dour and serious about the various Dwarven toymakers' stalls. Some manage a slight smile for their younger customers, but most are clearly distraught. Balin's murder, coupled with the news of the previous aggression along the river, is evidently putting every Dwarf on edge.

Characters enquiring after Balin's demise are met with a frown by any Dwarf (*"I have no wish to darken this bright market with such talk!"*), but the Dalish workers at the market are less sensible: should the companions ask, they discover that word has it that Balin was attacked while passing through the Old Quarter late at night. None seem to know more than this.

Seeking Thrun

Before they leave the Market Square, the heroes notice that, despite the general gloom, quite a crowd has gathered about one stall in particular. Here, people are laughing heartily as they examine the wares on display. Upon approaching, they see a relatively young and lively Dwarf demonstrating the properties of some marvellous wooden boxes that open in different ways depending on how and where they are tapped, a series of interlinked rings that move about one another in a flowing dance, and small intricate dragons that writhe about one's fingers. The young Dwarf is named Thrun, and he is a toy-maker, of course. His work seems genuinely wondrous and deserving the general attention it is getting.



But not everyone seems to agree on the worthiness of his work: two older Dwarves, smiths by the rough look of them, have started to comment loudly upon the work of the toy-maker, belittling its relevance and using harsh words. Dwarven companions will instantly recognise them by their accent as coming from the Iron Hills, a subtlety caught by other companions only on a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Lore)** check.

Not content to bully a single toy-maker, one of the Dwarves raises his voice, addressing everyone in the Market Square able to hear him:

"You all should be ashamed of yourself, wasting your time on such trifling matters! Toys and trinkets! Only a few years ago you would have been the laughingstock of any Dwarf who ever set foot in a forge. Do you think it is of any value the praise you are getting from Men? An Orc is better at smithing than any Man!"

The crowd that gathered around the stall of Thrun rapidly scatters, as everyone prefers to put some distance between themselves and the two disgruntled Dwarves. The toy-maker looks at the dispersing crowd, raising his arms in desperation:

"Look at what you have done now, all my clients gone! A plague on miners and their stiff necks!"

Upon hearing the toy-maker's outburst, the two miners move to face him menacingly, with one of them stepping so close to Thrun that the beards of the two Dwarves touch. Blows are about to be exchanged!

Helping the Toy-maker

Companions wishing to defuse the confrontation can try different things, anything from making a **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation)** check to counter the ugly words of the two smiths, to using a **DC 13 Intelligence (Traditions)** check to instil some sense of decorum in the arguing Dwarves or intoning a distracting song (**a DC 15 Charisma (Performance)** check) to lighten the situation.

If the companions fail their checks or ignore the matter, a brief scuffle erupts, ending with Thrun falling and knocking over some of the crates he used to set up his display; he isn't injured, only bruised in body and spirit. Then, the two miners look about the market crowd in defiance and leave.

If the heroes succeed, the smiths end their outburst without resorting to any violence, leaving the heroes with a grateful Dwarf that might later be willing to speak more openly about what is going on (see page 33).

If the Loremaster deems that the companions handled the situation particularly well, for example by making a successful Traditions check, the two Iron Hills smiths themselves will calm down and feel the need to elaborate a bit about their discontent. From their words, the companions might deduce that tension is building among the Dwarves, because of ongoing discussions within King Dáin's own Council. The smiths won't provide more details to outsiders, but a Dwarven companion can learn that the argument involves smithing techniques no longer being honoured in the forges beneath the Lonely Mountain.

"Today, we already cannot rival the metal-work of our fathers. At this pace, the secrets of our masters will be lost at the turn of a generation. And all this only for the sake of the gold of the Men of Dale? The gold that was ours in the first place..."

While most Free Folk would find the whole argument tedious, to Dwarven smiths it is a most serious matter indeed.

7 The Raven, Again

After the commotion provoked by the Dwarven smiths subsides, the companions will likely wish to speak to Thrun about Balin. He simply points to a raven perched on a nearby lamp post, where an alley going east from the square leads to the Red Row. When the companions get closer, the raven salutes them; croaking and flapping its wings. In a sense of déjà-vu, the bird looks definitely to be the same that led the companions to the Dwarf-lord!

Once recognised, the bird takes flight, landing on a statue in the middle of Red Row, before heading straight over Snapfire Alley. The raven eventually comes to rest at the top of a small building in the northern portion of the Old Quarter. Once the companions reach the spot, a small door on the front side of the building cracks open and a hand beckons from the shadows to bid them quickly inside.

"Well met again!"
says Balin, son of Fundin.

- Part Three -
Uphill and Down Dale

Balin leads the Company into a dark antechamber, and then down a flight of steps, to a wide underground room furnished with sturdy wooden furniture and lit by beautiful Dwarven lamps that fill the room with light, but emit no smoke. He gestures about the room. *"One of the few structures that remained intact from Dale of old. Only a few old Dwarves know about it,"* he declares with a wink.

Dark Business

After the Company has settled and Balin has passed about flagons of ale, he gets down to business.

"I have a confession to make. I did not tell you everything last time we met, but I wasn't sure I could trust you. It was no mere misfortune that befell my friends and I. It seems clear that the ruffians didn't attack us to rob us, but were seeking us out with another purpose. Seeking me out, most likely. This is why I resolved to retreat from public appearances for the time being. If someone wants me dead, then I'm safer if they think it so."

"I wasn't going to Esgaroth on an ordinary business trip. I was investigating a rumour concerning a secret meeting of conspirators that I was told occurred on the road from Dale to Lake-town. I was surprised when the thugs attacked us. Since I confided my plans to only a few close friends within the Lonely Mountain, I fear I have been betrayed."

"Now, pretending to be dead will give me time to discover who is behind this, and it may indeed make them bolder and draw them from the shadows, but it severely limits my operations, as you can imagine! In Erebor I have a number of agents I can trust, but here in Dale I still haven't found someone up to the task. If you are willing to lend your eyes and ears to me for a while, there are a number of leads I wish to follow."

If the Company has no interest in helping Balin, he will be both surprised and disappointed, but will send them on their way, asking them only to not discuss this business or his survival. Should the heroes agree to help the old Dwarf, he discloses what he knows.

Questions, Questions

Balin tells the Company that months ago he started to feel worried at a tension rising in Dale, between the Bardings and the Dwarves of Erebor. What started as small quarrels between counsellors and envoys had steadily grown worse, to the point that in recent times every meeting of the King's Council seemed to have an endless list of litigations to address, having to do with arguments flaring up between Dwarven craftsmen and Dale merchants and lords. Many in Erebor had started to openly speak against the "ungrateful and scornful folk of Dale".

At first, Balin thought these troubles to be of minor concern, and typical of two neighbouring young kingdoms. Several weeks ago, that changed. Gundri, a veteran of the Battle of Five Armies belonging to the so-called 'Stone Guard' of Erebor got especially deep into his cups one night and was heard by many saying that the time was soon coming when, "matters would be set right, between Hills and Mountain. And the greedy Mannish rabble will get theirs...".

Unsure at what his words could refer to, Balin resolved to question the guard, but Gundri failed to show up when summoned. He was eventually found dead, drowned in a fermenting keg in Stángard, the very midst of Erebor.

Alarmed, Balin started a full-fledged investigation, but has since been grasping at shadows, thwarted at multiple turns. He was on the river the other night because his agents had intercepted a message that made Balin believe a 'payment' of some sort was due to be passed between a Dwarf and other conspirators. The elderly statesman now suspects that his quarry was on to him and the 'intercepted' message was, in fact a trap for which he fell.

7 THE TASK

Balin listens grimly if the companions tell him of the altercation at the Toy-market. He then asks them to make discrete inquiries about town. He is interested in discovering who attacked him, and who stands to gain the most from rising tensions between and within Dale and Erebor.

Balin would like the heroes to find out what they can and report back what they have learned so far in a few days.

- If the Company achieved 2 successes or less in their talk with Balin on the road to Dale, he offers them the equivalent of 5 gold pieces apiece for their assistance, as well as his good will. If they achieved 3 successes or more, the offer is 10 gold pieces and he will speak to King Dáin on their behalf.

The following entries detail what the companions can learn in Dale, considering the players' most likely courses of investigation. It will take the heroes two or more days to seek out every piece of information, based on their choices and thoroughness.

The Toy-maker's Tale

If the companions tried to help the toy-maker at the square, Thrun will look for them, as he is worried by the recent events — Balin's news and subsequent need to disappear has disturbed him. The Dwarf might 'accidentally' bump into them as they are walking on the road right after having met Balin, or he might show up at their favoured inn one evening. When the meeting takes place, Thrun thanks them profusely for their intervention and invites them to visit him later in his workshop for a private chat.

The Loremaster can structure the meeting using the rules for Audiences found on page 80 of *Adventures in Middle-earth Loremaster's Guide*. Thrun is an Anvil Way Smith (see page 45 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*) but the toy-maker will not be **Stubborn** with the Company and already has a **+1** Expectation of the Company due to their assisting Balin.

The Toy Workshop

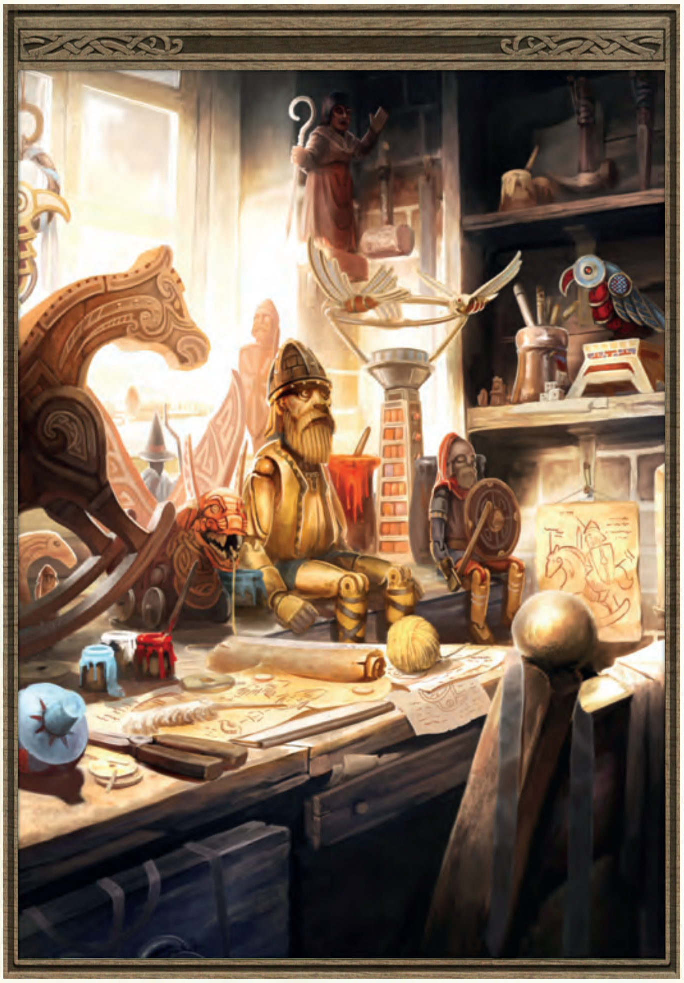
Thrun's workshop is on the ground floor of a building in Anvil Way. It's a wide, dark locale, filled with the intricate mechanisms of his many toys. Wheels and gears whirr and click constantly, and his workbench is lined with rows of brass calipers, pliers and a multitude of strange-looking hammers of all sizes. Drawings describing the design for various mechanical engines line one wall. On a table lies what looks to be the beginning of a magnificent toy dragon, wrought from gold and silver.

When the adventurers arrive, Thrun looks up from his workbench through a series of lenses that magnify his eyes to a ridiculously huge degree, before setting them aside. Seen in his working environment, Thrun is the very model of a Dwarven craftsman, obsessing with the minutiae of his creations and always aiming for ways to perfect his craft. Thrun has a very short beard for a Dwarf; his hair got snagged in his toys' mechanisms one too many times and so he sheared it short. His bright eyes twinkle when he talks and he talks a lot when he's not working.

"Welcome! Welcome! Oh-ho, so you came. I hope I haven't discomforted you too much with my invitation, but I think that what I have to say will be of interest."

Thrun bustles about clearing tools and bits of machinery off chairs so one or two companions at least have a place to sit.

"I am sorry if I disturbed you with my request to see you, but I feel I haven't adequately thanked you for your help. Also, I wish to provide you with some explanation for the behaviour of my kinsmen. It's not my intention to excuse them for their aggression, but I have pondered the question and I think there might be more to it than a simple grudge."



"I feel that in recent years, Dwarves from the Iron Hills have watched the rising of the Kingdom of Erebor with mixed feelings. Where people like myself have found in it an opportunity to develop our craft beyond even the wildest dreams of our ancestors, others pity our ambition and consider our work to be nothing more than a meaningless waste of time, not befitting the cunning of our kind."

"It is thus understandable that those two poor lads from the Iron Hills feel such anger to see that jewellers and toy-makers encounter success and prosper in their trade. All the more when to their eyes the honoured craft of the toolsmith languishes, forsaken and forgotten."

"But this is nonsense of course! There is now a wide world outside our mines and strongholds, and there will be always someone needing good tools, like hammers, pickaxes and mattocks. Why, several of my best tools came from Niping's forge!"

Niping, he states, is one of the best Dwarven smiths alive today, when it comes to good solid ironwork. He is one of the masters of Durin's Folk, deserving the respect and admiration of all Dwarves, but he is too tied to the old ways. He has made several public declarations criticising the work of the smiths of Erebor, dismissing them as unworthy of their trade. Judging from their words and provenance, the two disgruntled miners were certainly friends or apprentices to Niping.

Where is Niping?

Niping the smith resides in the Iron Hills, his ancestral home, surrounded by his faithful. He does not make an appearance in this adventure as written. He plays the part of the puppeteer, holding the strings but keeping himself in the dark.

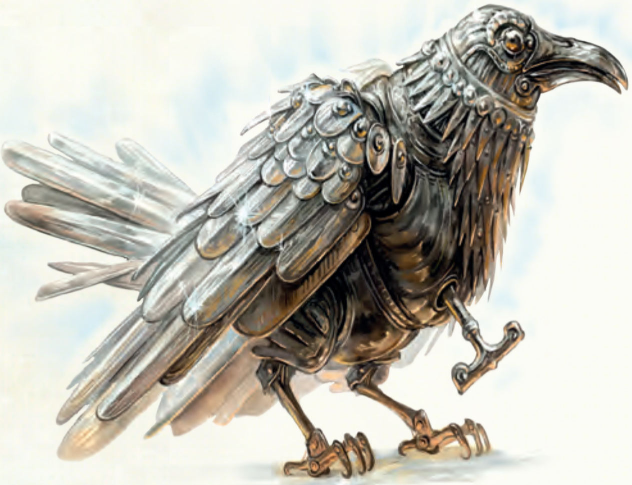
Thrun as an Informer

The primary reason that prompted Thrun to contact the companions is plain to see: the idea that someone could take his craft from him, for example barring him from working on toys and force him to return to the forge, is an unacceptable nightmare, one Thrun would do anything to prevent from becoming reality.

If the companions mention Balin, Thrun glances furtively about his workshop. *"Let him stay safely dead for now,"* he says. *"But I can help in other ways."* To further this end, he has something to give the companions: the toy-maker disappears at the back of his workshop for a few moments, only to return unwrapping a parcel.

As he reaches the companions he holds out what looks to be a silvery mechanical bird, a thrush to be precise.

"This small mechanical friend of mine is a capable flier. If you let it go from anywhere around town or in its vicinity, it will fly straight back here, only to return to the precise spot from where you let it go if I wound it back and send it out again. This way, you could deliver a message, writing on a small piece of parchment and tying it to the bird's leg: I will make sure the recipient will receive it. You could also tell anyone you wish to check here regularly for messages, I can keep a secret..."

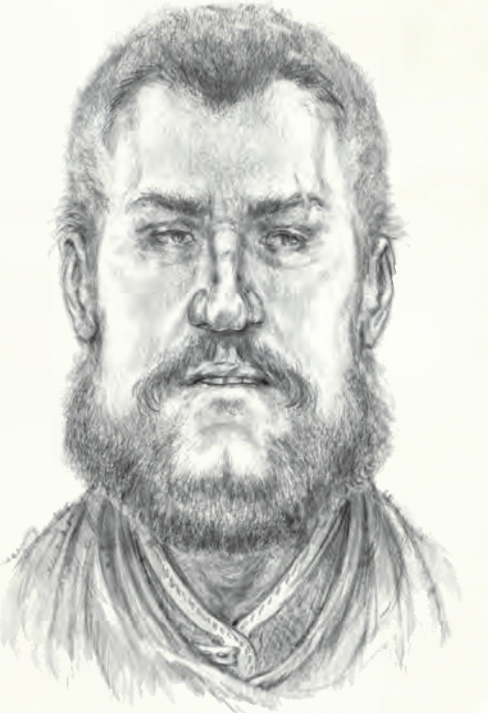


Thrun's Marvellous Thrush

The mechanical thrush is wrought of silver and exceedingly intricate. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal the raven's feathers are in fact made of precious Mithril! The bird has an obvious key on its underside. Once the key is turned, the bird's eyes "blink", it extends its wings and leaps into the sky, wheeling about and then heading the right way.

Investigating the Boat

The Quays of Dale lie to the east of the Traders Gate. Its docks are busy from the dawn to the setting of the sun, and boats of many shapes and sizes are moored to the various landings. At first sight, no craft seems to correspond perfectly to the one the companions are looking for.



If the companions look for help, catching the attention of the right person can be a daunting prospect in the hustle and bustle of the Quays. A hero already familiar with how business is conducted here or one making a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Traditions)** check will know to go to Halward, the present Reeve of the Quays.

Halward is a stout, dark-bearded fellow originally from Lake-town, performing his duties from a cabin near the South Quay. He is a busy man and has little time for questions, but a **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion)** check will keep his attention for enough time to entertain the Company.

If asked about the boat the companions saw before they met Balin on the road to Dale, Halward will remark that vessels matching the description are a common sight along the full length of the Running River:

"Typical Dorwinion boat, for navigating the marshes. Some like those as they are fast, but cannot carry much weight."

A question specifically mentioning the boat's unusually large steerboard, or the painted eyes on its prow, will jog his memory.

"Aye, on the South Quay, there was such a skiff. Now that you ask, it was a bit peculiar, its crew met with two men I'd take for servants of a Barding noble."

"They were wearing a cloak, and it was too dark to see well, I fear, but when they left the docks I noticed that one of them was wearing a red livery under the cloak."

The Dorwinion Connection

Companions from Dale, or those succeeding on a **DC 10 Intelligence (Lore)** check, suggest that if they wish to investigate the Dorwinion clue, they should probably go visit the Commons, the corner of the Residential Quarter of Dale where merchants and wanderers passing through town or waiting to find more stable housing in the city normally stay (see also the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*, page 48). Here are the temporary accommodations of many merchants from the East, as well as traders and wine-sellers from Dorwinion.

Finding information among the brightly-coloured silk tents requires a **DC 15 Intelligence (Riddle or Traditions)** check. On a success, the companions are introduced to Katun, an Easterling merchant matriarch acting as head of the small community of Easterlings of Dale (if the heroes befriended Katun in the **The Silver Needle**, they do not need to roll — they are led to her directly).

Meeting Katun

Katun will be quite cautious with those she doesn't know, but open and cheerful with friends. If asked about the Dorwinion marsh boat, she says that a craft corresponding to the companions' description was reported stolen, only to be found abandoned a few days ago.

Whoever stole it tried to sink it by smashing a hole in its hull, but the currents pushed it on a shallow bend of the River Running and some hunters noticed it. Katun knows the original owner of the boat, a Dorwinion trader by the name of Gwion.

Gwion

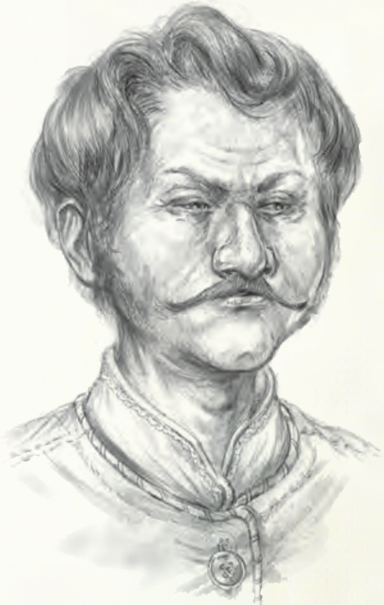
With directions from Katun, the companions easily find Gwion. He is a middle-aged dealer in musical instruments, living in a house in the Residential Quarter. When the companions mention the stolen boat to Gwion, he can barely contain his rage – the boat was to be a gift to his younger son, who likes to go fowling on the River Running. One day the boat simply disappeared, and the dock authorities had no explanation to give! Now he will have to wait for a carpenter of Lake-town to repair the boat.

If the companions treat Gwion respectfully, before they leave, the merchant will hand them an envelope, stained with traces of mud. He says:

"When I pulled the boat out of the water I found this, stuck under the prow compartment. I was puzzled by it, see if you can figure its meaning."

The envelope is open and contains a letter written on plain parchment. Written in Westron, it states:

The passage is almost complete. Make sure that your men are prepared.



There are no other markings, nor a signature. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Lore or Riddle)** check indicates that the handwriting might belong to a Dwarf.

The Red Livery

Based on the information gathered on the quays, the companions might decide to ask around amidst the streets of Dale for petty nobles whose servants use a red livery.

This course of investigation lets the heroes automatically single out three lords from the Dalelands: *Bryni, Lord of Strandburg, Gunvar, Lord of Ashbrook,* and *Thegn Osgar.*

A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** check (or the use of an appropriate Distinctive Quality, see page 6) will reveal the general take of the average inhabitant of Dale on each of the three men. Each entry includes additional details that a hero discovers if they succeed by 5 or more.

- **Bryni, Lord of Strandburg** (see page 57 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*) is a nobleman from the Northern Dalelands, in town to see if he can pick up any fancy new trinkets. King Bard granted him the village of Strandburg when Bryni was not yet twenty years old. He is now in his thirties, and the years have toughened him a bit, but he hasn't lost his desire to appear "lordly" to others.

  A higher success reveals that the townsfolk considers Bryni to be no more than a vain and incompetent fool.

- **Gunvar, Lord of Ashbrook** (see page 39 for a full description) has come to visit the Toy-market, a personal tradition he has honoured since the refounding of the kingdom. Gunvar is known for his ambition and his interest in governing of the city. While his manor of Ashbrook is outside the walls, Gunvar spends the vast majority of his days in Dale. *Note to the LM: Gunvar is involved in the disruptions in Dale and is one of the villains of this adventure.*

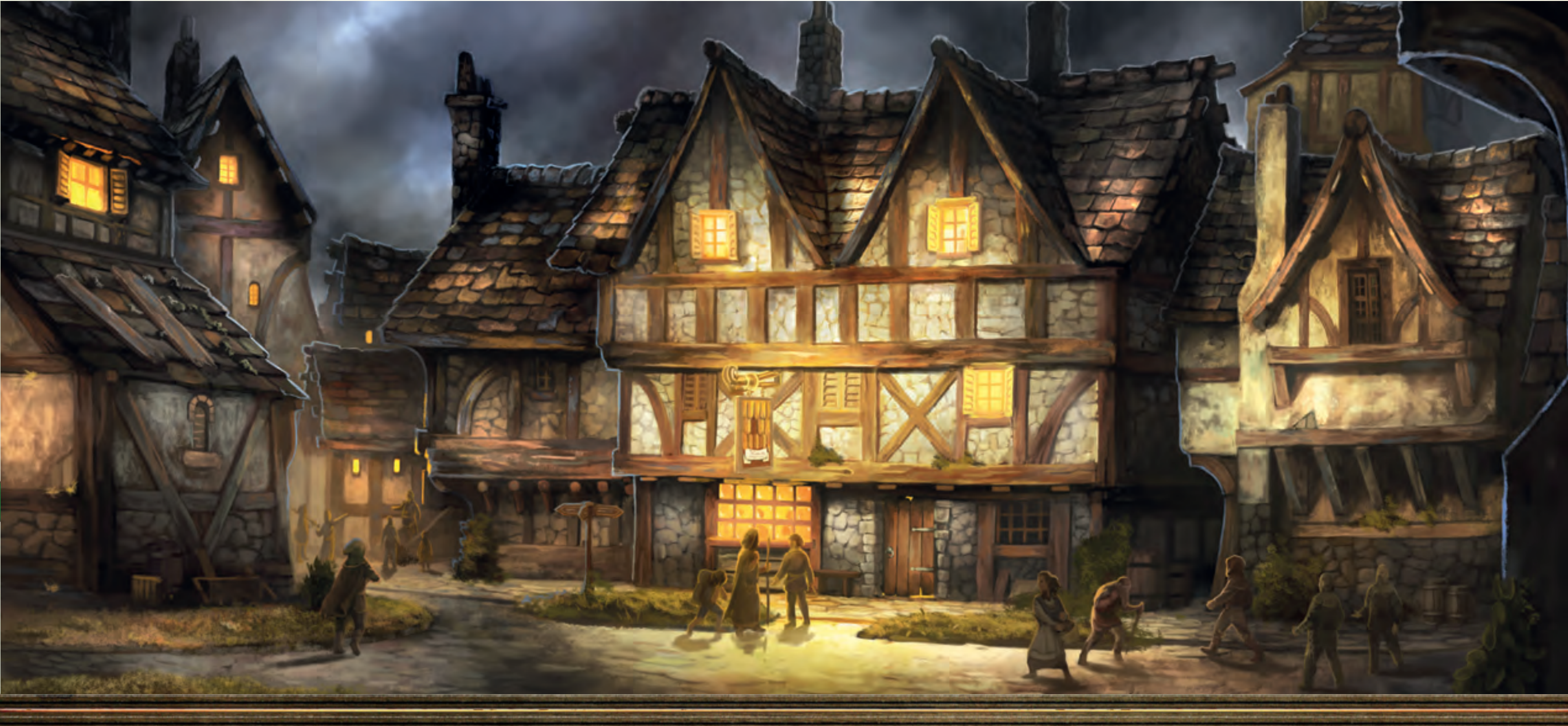
  Succeeding by 5 or more uncovers that many hold Gunvar to be exceedingly ambitious.

- **Thegn Osgar.** An older lord who was in Lake-town when it was attacked by Smaug in 2941. He was badly burned and his left arm was left withered. He is known for his dislike of Dwarves, as he blames their greed for the destruction of Esgaroth.

  A superior level of success finds that most inhabitants of Dale regard Osgar as an extremely honourable man·

The Missing Scale

One of the most convenient spots for gathering information is certainly *The Missing Scale*, a famed inn which sits on the southern edge of the Market Square (see page 43 of *the Lonely Mountain Region Guide*). A Loremaster may conveniently set the description of a particularly fruitful meeting in the common room of *'the Scale'*, under the gaze of the wrought-iron Dragon that inspired the inn's name.



8

Back to Balin

When the companions meet Balin again, he will listen attentively to what the heroes have to report. The actions that the Dwarf will take in the following hours is based on the amount of useful information he receives from the companions (see below).

The items of information that the heroes may report are:

- The heroes describe what Thrun the toy-maker told them about the quarrel between the smiths of the Iron Hills and those of Erebor. Balin is not surprised, but takes note.
- Niping is mentioned. Balin raises an eyebrow, as he knows the smith very well, and he had no reasons to doubt his loyalty so far.
- The companions report that the boat is a marsh skiff from Dorwinion.
- The Company shows Balin the letter found in the boat.
- The heroes report the testimony about the red-liveried servants.
- The identity of the suspected noblemen is revealed to Balin.

Balin tries not to betray any sentiment as the companions recount their findings, but a **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals, if the companions have reported at least four information items out of the six listed above, that Balin appears determined to take action. The companions convinced him that something is indeed afoot.

As one of his most trusted advisors, Balin is to confer with King Dáin in three days. The Dwarf encourages the Company to learn anything else they can before his meeting, as he intends to present the king his suspicions.

- Part Four -
An Interested Lord

The day following the Company's last meeting with Balin, a messenger approaches a companion on the street. The man wears red livery showing a wavy blue band across a white field. A **DC 13 Intelligence (Lore)** check reveals He bears a missive that invites the heroes to meet with Lord Gunvar, as he has learned of their inquiries and believes that there are things useful for them to hear.

Ashbrook is about an hour's ride to the west of Dale. If the group agrees to meet with Lord Gunvar, the messenger gives them precise directions, then he hurries off to tell his lord of their coming.

What if the Company refuses?

If the heroes refuse to meet with Lord Gunvar, the messenger indicates that his lord will be most upset, but takes their answer all the same. What happens next depends on the companions. Do they stealthily follow after the messenger or continue to look for answers in the city?

Regardless, Gunvar and Niping's plans will then proceed relatively unopposed. Balin may personally bring the Company with him when he goes back to Erebor to reveal himself, but much damage will be wrought and it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to determine the true guilty parties, advancing Niping's plan considerably. If the Company accompanies Balin, they may end up being called upon to help fight the fires that Niping's followers start in Erebor. (see 44 for details).

Off to Ashbrook

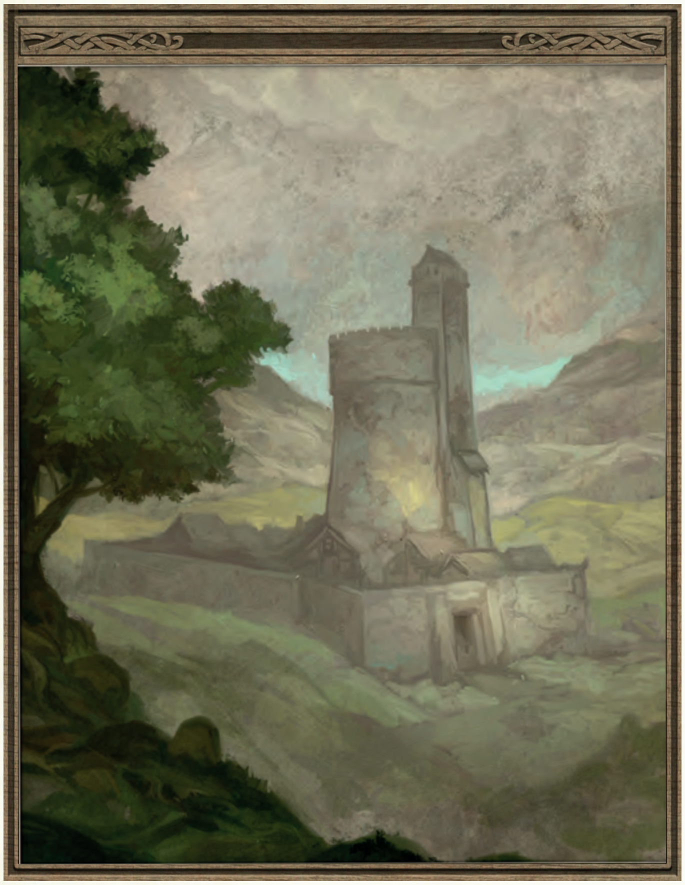
Ashbrook is a rich manor house, an hour outside of the walls of Dale, encircled by a short border wall delimiting the lord's demesne. The building itself is dominated by a solid stone tower, once intended to keep bandits at bay.

When the companions arrive, they are met before the gates by guards and the doorwarden, who requests that they leave their weapons in his custody. If the heroes comply, they are allowed to enter and meet the Lord of Ashbrook.

7

An Audience over Dinner

The companions are invited to take their place in the main hall of the manor house. A wooden table occupies the length of the hall, and wooden chairs with high backs are arranged along the two sides. As the heroes sit, a butler enters to fill the companions' cups with red wine, poured from an elegant glass decanter.



When everyone is seated, Lord Gunvar enters and takes his place at the far end of the table, raising a crystal goblet.

"Welcome to Ashbrook. I invited you here because I think you and I are pursuing similar goals, and thus I wonder if we could help each other..."

Motivation & Expectations

If the companions suspect Lord Gunvar, he is not aware of it. He only knows that they have been asking questions about the relations between Dale and Erebor and has misinterpreted their investigation. He is certain that Balin is dead and has no idea that the companions might be acting on the Dwarf's orders. This advantage should allow the companions several options for the encounter, for example they might 'play along', pretending to agree with Gunvar's resolutions and offer their help (see overleaf).

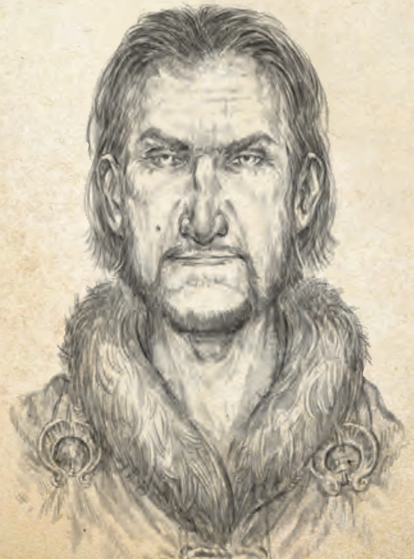
For his part, Gunvar's goal with this Audience is to assess the companions' potential as a threat or resource, and to eventually neutralise or employ them, as the time to undertake his action of sabotage approaches. The following Expectations apply:

- +**1** if the companions have their own tales of strife between Men and Dwarves.
- +**2** if the heroes seem eager to take action on behalf of Gunvar and Dale.
- -**1** if there is a Dwarf or an Elf in the Company, unless that individual convinces Lord Gunvar that they care more for Men than their own people.
- -**2** if they try to reason with him or attempt to convince him to take peaceful measures instead of his more radical ideas.

Lord Gunvar

Gunvar is a tall man in his mid to later 40s, with black hair shot through with silver and sharp green eyes that miss little. His ambition and strong dislike for the current political situation in Dale has brought him to forge an alliance with Niping, as he thinks that the smith's schemes will undermine the stability of King Bard's rule. Gunvar's ultimate goal is to replace the current king with Lord Hakon, who he believes would make for a far better ruler than Bard.

Gunvar is a Barding Noble (see page 46 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*). He is always accompanied by several of his Men-at-Arms (see below), at least one for each Player-hero.



Gunvar's Men-at-Arms

Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Armour 16 (Corslet of Mail, Swordmaster)
Hit Points 33 (6d8+6)
Speed 30 ft

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Westron
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Swordmaster. The Man-at-Arms gains a +2 bonus to AC while wielding a broadsword or long sword (included above).

Actions

Multiattack. The Man-at-Arms makes two attacks with his long sword.

Long Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage or 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage if used with two hands..

Reactions

Counterattack (Recharge 5-6). If an attack misses the Man-at-Arms, he can use his reaction to make an attack roll with Advantage. He must be wielding a melee weapon and able to see his attacker.

The Speech

Gunvar says that the companions need no introduction, as their reputation precedes them (he actually investigated them prior to the Audience). He instead introduces himself as a humble servant of the kingdom of Dale, blessed by a title and personal wealth allowing him to do something for his king.

The spokesperson for the Company succeeds automatically at the Introduction check.

Soon after the start of the dinner, Gunvar stands and starts pacing the hall, declaiming as if making a public speech.

"I have asked to meet you because I think that you can understand my concerns. The kingdom of Dale is a young one, not more than an infant compared to our neighbours, the ancient realms of the Dwarves and Elves. But our lineage, our heritage, goes back in time for many centuries. We were here before Smaug, and here we are again, reborn from Dragon-fire.

But what matters more is that if it weren't for our king there would be no kingdom under the mountain, and certainly the Woodland Realm itself would have been reduced to ashes by the Dragon's wrath.

Yet today our neighbours see us as inferior, and treat us as such. Years ago King Bard stood tall and demanded that we were given what was ours by right, but he is not that man anymore. Wizards and foreigners have weakened his will, and the Dwarves and Elves have seen it. They fear that the king's weakness will eventually put their interests in danger.

What is worse is that most of us refuse to see. We are blinded by greed, and are willing to let others take decisions for us, as long as we are allowed to get rich. Not everyone is blind though. Warriors like you and I see that there are many enemies threatening the kingdom, and not all of them are beyond our borders. We see and we act accordingly.

"Listen, my guests," says Gunvar, now speaking in a softer, more accommodating voice. *"I said we, for we it may be, if you will join with me. Help me to strengthen the kingdom, for the sake of Dale in the first place, but also for Erebor and the Woodland Realm. A weakened throne isn't good for anyone in the region."*

Gunvar's Offer

The lord is offering the Company a chance to join him in his efforts. Gunvar hints at a mission he will carry out this same night they are allowed to be part of, should they pledge their allegiance to him and his cause.

The Loremaster must now adjudicate what happens next, based on the actions and words of the companions during the dinner. Here follow a number of possible outcomes, to be adopted based on how the companions conduct the encounter:

The Companions Play Dumb

The companions try to downplay their involvement and their knowledge of what is going on, in an attempt to convince Gunvar that they are incompetent, uninterested or harmless, or a combination of the three.

- They must make the Final Audience check at Disadvantage (Gunvar is Cunning, see page 6) and must use **Performance** or **Riddle** to convince him of their worthlessness.

If the companions succeed, Gunvar is convinced that the heroes are no more than inept fools, and that they do not represent a threat to his schemes. He lets them go, being careful not to give them any inkling about his plans. This allows the heroes to keep a watch on the manor should they intend to do so, and eventually witness the mustering of Gunvar's men (see *In Deep Places*).

An Uneasy Alliance

The companions lie to Gunvar, pretending to agree with him and accepting his offer to join him (anguish from the deception causes each hero to gain 1 Shadow).

- To convince Gunvar, the companions need to make a Final Audience check and must use **Performance** or **Riddle** to convince him of their sincerity. Since Gunvar is hearing what he wants to hear from the companions, his Cunning does not come into play.

If they succeed Gunvar compliments them for their wisdom and discernment. He then proceeds to reveal his plan for the immediate future: by the break of dawn, Gunvar and a select group of Men will finally take action and do something that will finally set many gears in motion; a demonstrative action that will shake the foundations of the realm. Will they be part of it? (see *In Deep Places*).

The Company is Imprisoned

Failing to convince Gunvar one way or the other, or refusing his offer outright leads to imprisonment. Guards enter the dining hall at a signal from Gunvar and the heroes are taken to several cells in the lower portion of the manor. The lord of Ashbrook orders his men to keep the companions under lock and key until further notice.

Gunvar intends to keep them in his prison cells at least until the sabotage of the furnaces of Erebor is accomplished. Later in the same evening though, the companions hear raised voices. Gunvar is speaking with someone (Lord Hakon) who is outraged at Gunvar's rash action. The voices are distant and muffled — it is impossible to know who Lord Gunvar is speaking with. The newcomer demands that Gunvar send his men to Erebor immediately and set their plans in motion, even if earlier than intended. *"I will send a message to inform our Dwarf friend."* The companions must be 'dealt with' the moment Gunvar leaves Ashbrook.

The Mechanical Messenger

Thrun the toy-maker's marvellous mechanical thrush (see page 35) can come in handy in whatever circumstance the companions may find themselves. In particular, the bird could be employed to carry a message to warn Balin of Gunvar's intention to do something against Erebor; if this happens, Balin could be forewarned and prepared for what's coming. However, Dale is a great distance away and the bird might not succeed...

At this point, the Company will doubtless decide that the time has come to flee. The players will certainly come up with several plans, and the mustering of Gunvar's men in the hours preceding the dawn could be the occasion they were waiting for:

- The Loremaster can stage the escape from the manor by improvising a fully detailed scene, or having the companions pass a series of ability checks, requiring a total of 9 successes. Suggested skills are **Athletics, Investigation, Riddle, Stealth** and **Survival**. The first time each skill is used set the DC at 13 and raise it by 2 each time afterwards. Success by more 5 or more counts as two successes towards the total. Have the players narrate both their successes and failures as they struggle to escape the clutches of the traitorous lord.

If the companions manage to flee, they recover their weapons from the manor's armoury and slip out of Ashbrook.

– Part Five –
In Deep Places

The warriors of Lord Gunvar, about thirty men, assemble before his manor a couple of hours before the breaking of dawn. They are all on horseback, wearing cloaks concealing their arms and armour. Gunvar intends to lead them to Erebor and enter the Lonely Mountain using a secret path that has been given to him by Niping.

- If the companions have kept a watch over the manor, they can follow Gunvar and his men until they enter the Mountain.
- If they have accepted Gunvar's offer and convinced him of their sincerity, they are given a cloak each and a mount, should they lack one. The Lord of Ashbrook tells them only to be ready, as what they are going to do will test their mettle and determination.
- If the companions were imprisoned, when they finally break free they will be able to follow the tracks of Gunvar's men.

The following paragraphs describe the path chosen by Gunvar and his men and their actions. The Loremaster can use the information provided to adapt it to the course of action chosen by the players.

To Erebor

On the northeastern side of the Lonely Mountain there is a large field of scree filling a narrow valley. The scree was carefully placed by Niping and his followers to hide a fissure in the mountainside that was once used as a narrow vent for mining gases. Niping's Dwarves have secretly enlarged the fissure, connecting it to a disused tunnel leading deep under Erebor.

A couple of hours after leaving Ashbrook, Gunvar and his men reach the field of scree and enter the concealed fissure.

Into the Depths

The tunnel used by Gunvar wends down deep into the roots of the Mountain. Sections of it are natural, while others have been clearly opened or enlarged artificially. At times, acrid fumes fill the hollows, and water trickles down the passage. Clambering over the many jagged edges within the roughly hewn tunnel for what seems to be long hours is tiring (each companion must make a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw or gain a level of Exhaustion).

The Abyss

The passage eventually comes to a large crevasse that stretches across the path. A large stone has been purposefully placed across the chasm as a bridge, and under it lies a bottomless gulf of inky blackness. Sounds echo from unnerving directions, and a sickly sweet stench rises from the depths.

Whoever attempts to cross the stone bridge must make a **DC 10 Wisdom** saving throw or become Miserable while they remain underground. Miserable heroes have Disadvantage on attack rolls and automatically fail all **Charisma** ability checks (see page 183 of the *Player's Guide*).

The First Forge

Eventually, the tunnel reaches the Lower Halls of Erebor, not where the great underground city of Stángard lies, or where Thorin Oakenshield sleeps his eternal sleep, but where the fires feeding the furnaces of Durin's Folk are kept burning day and night (see the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*, page 14).

A Dwarf of the Lonely Mountain will instantly realise where they are: in the proximity of the First Forge, a series of vast furnaces where the bulk of the ore extracted from below the Mountain is smelted. While there are many forges within Erebor, the one they stand within is considered one of the "pillars" of the Kingdom under the Mountain.

The din made by the unceasing toil of the Dwarves and the labouring of their great engines is deafening like the wind in a stormy sea, and men must yell to be heard. Here is where Gunvar intends to bring his plan to fruition.

Sabotage!

When they enter the vast, cavernous hall housing the First Forge, Gunvar and his men set about sabotaging the smelting furnaces and the engines employed to refine the precious metals. The Dwarven labourers and smiths working the night shift cry out in outrage, but are quickly rounded up by the armed saboteurs and imprisoned in a nearby chamber.

In a few moments, billows of dark smoke begin to fill the air. It seems that Niping's plan worked perfectly, and the companions are the only ones who can do something about it. Or are they?

Balin's Counterplan

While the companions were investigating on his behalf, Balin has been busy piecing together the parts of the puzzle the heroes and his agents have been providing him. In particular, the effectiveness of Balin's countermeasures to Niping's plan is based on how much information the companions brought him so far.

1. If the Company brought all available information listed on page 38 to the attention of Balin, and warned him of Gunvar's imminent action using the mechanical thrush, then a contingent of Dwarven warriors from the 'Stone Guard' surprises Gunvar and his men in the First Forge and surround them, forcing the treacherous Lord to surrender. Balin himself is present, fully armed and masked (and thus incognito) to capture Gunvar alive.
2. If Balin received all the available information but wasn't warned by the thrush, then a group of warriors from the 'Stone Guard' has been warned to stand on alert, but will intervene only if the companions sound the alarms (see below), arriving on the scene after **four rounds**.
3. If Balin has received at *least* four information items out of the six listed on page 38, the Dwarf has contacted Dwalin, telling him of his suspicions. From that moment Dwalin has taken to make an extra tour of patrol himself, and will intervene with his men after **six rounds**, if the companions sound the alarms (see below).
4. If Balin has received less than four out of six of the information items listed on page 38, then Balin has been unable to prepare anything and Erebor is caught by surprise by Gunvar's initiative. The companions must sort the situation out by themselves, as even sounding the alarms allows Gunvar to escape the Mountain without opposition.

Sounding the Alarms

Since the forges of Erebor are dangerous places, prone to all sorts of accidents, great bells, gongs and huge horns are distributed across the length of the hall housing the furnaces. Getting to them unseen requires a **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** check. The first alarm the companions try to use proves to have been disabled – further proof of treachery within Erebor. It takes an additional **Stealth** check (as above) to move unseen to a new alarm.

Companions that fail either of the **Stealth** checks are in for a running battle through the forges as they search for an alarm to sound while Gunvar's men attack them. Each companion can either fight back, or desperately use their action to make a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to find a new alarm.

Fighting Gunvar in the Forge

Unless Gunvar and his men are ambushed and captured by Balin and the 'Stone Guard' warriors, the Company will have to bring the fight directly to the Lord of Ashbrook and his men at some point or another.

- Gunvar has 20 Warriors (*Loremaster's Guide*, page 71) of his personal retinue at his side, plus a dozen hand-picked Men-at-Arms (see page 40) serving as his bodyguard. Luckily for the companions, most of them are busy sabotaging the furnaces, and thus no more than 1 Warrior and 1 Man-at-Arms can face a companion at a time.

The entries listed above indicate for how long the Company has to fight Gunvar, before the 'Stone Guard' or Dwalin arrives to capture him and his men. If no one is coming (see entry 4), then the companions will have to defeat the saboteurs alone, let them escape from Erebor unchecked, or die in the attempt to stop them.

- Within the First Forge are many crucibles, carts filled with ore or slag, and other elements of the battlefield that both the Player-heroes and the Loremaster might use to their advantage. Such elements provide half-cover for a creature crouching near them but deal 2d4+2 fire damage to anyone forced to touch them directly.

- Part Six -
Treachery & Wisdom

The conclusive part of the adventure assumes that the companions succeeded in avoiding the sabotage attempt, and that Gunvar and his men have been subdued, in one way or another.

When peace and order is restored in the great hall of the First Forge, King Dáin himself enters the scene, surrounded by his mattock-wielding Iron Guard. If he knows the Company from past adventures, he looks briefly surprised to see them in the depths of Erebor, but immediately demands to know what is going on.

At this opportune moment, Balin reveals himself by removing his helm (or by arriving at the scene if he wasn't present), shocking everyone. All dignitaries (the king and Dwalin if he is there) are both astounded and visibly moved to see their friend alive and well.

Without further ado, Balin orders the guards to put all outsiders in chains, inviting the companions to join him by his side. Nevertheless, Dáin demands that all present come to the Great Chamber of Thrór at once and explain themselves. But Balin intervenes:

"My King, please let us assemble in the Great Hall of Thráin, here in the Lower Halls. I know you don't favour the place where the Dragon used to sleep, dreaming of the butchery he committed against our kin, but what we have to discuss is not well suited to our hall of feasting and council."

After a moment of hesitation, Dáin accepts Balin's suggestion, and guards and prisoners assemble in a throng. If the 'Stone Guard' was not already present, then Sígar, a Dwarf loyal to Niping, slips in amidst the assembly.

Before the King

Balin swiftly questions the Company about what has transpired since last they spoke. He presents what he knows about the Dwarven traitor before the King under the Mountain.

If the Company managed to keep Lord Gunvar alive, he does not know the name of the Dwarf he has been working with, but he has learned more than Niping realised. Depending on their investigations, the Company may well be able to make a fair guess at who might be involved, at least enough to bring up Niping's name.

Niping Exposed!

Once it is clear that Niping is the traitor, the king sighs. *"The Iron Hills are far away. But I will send for him... he will answer for his plotting."* At this, Sígar can take no more. He draws a sword and charges screaming at Gunvar. The Company may have suspected this and attempt to intervene, but unless one or more of companions deliberately stated that they were keeping an eye on Sígar, he strikes down Gunvar before being slain himself by the Iron Guard. If Lord Gunvar survives, he'll imply that for fair treatment, he'll impart information that could lead to other conspirators. King Dáin orders him taken away. He won't survive Erebor's prison – one of his own men loyal to Hakon will ensure he swiftly dies in captivity before he can reveal that lord's involvement.

No Proof!

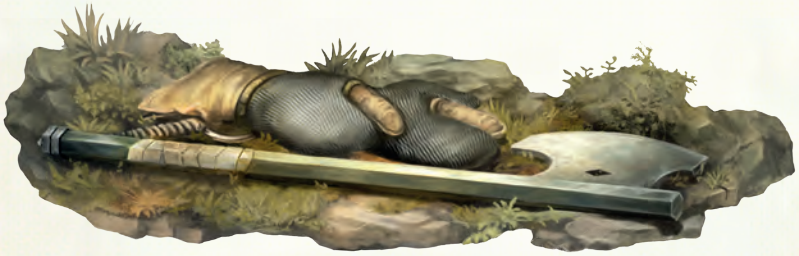
If the Company failed to provide evidence of the conspiracy (and Gunvar died in the battle) then they are likely to be held responsible along with the rest of Gunvar's men for the damage to the Grand Forges, a particularly serious crime within Erebor. Thankfully, Balin intercedes on their behalf. Despite Balin's vote of confidence, failure here reflects badly on the Company and they are at Disadvantage in any Audiences with Dwarves of Erebor until such time as their actions can rectify their mistake.

No matter what suspicions they have about who was behind this, their lack of proof leaves Niping at large. His next move will depend on the campaign. Surely Balin will be suspicious of him but can do very little. He will certainly be planning vengeance on the Company...

- Epilogue -

Once the aftermath of the destruction has become clear, while cheered by the return of Balin, Erebor mourns the death of several members of their 'Stone Guard' and labourers of the First Forge.

Balin, Dwalin, and Dáin are hugely grateful to the fellowship for helping in such a delicate matter, even if not all goes well. If the matter of the traitor goes unresolved, Dáin is publicly angry with the Company, but wishes them well in private, citing "Dwarven politics" as the problem. In additional to whatever Balin promised the Company, if they exposed Niping, the king rewards each companion with a small bag of gems worth 10 gold pieces.



-to dungeons- deep

for heroes of level 8 or 9

- **When**: The adventure is set in 2959, in early autumn.
- **Where:** The Company goes west from Dale to the Grey Mountains' Narrows, then visits the remnants of the kingdom of the Last Lord of Dale in the northern Waste.
- **What:** Events concern those who seek a treasure mausoleum and, in particular, a coat of Dwarf-linked rings that was commissioned by Girion, before the coming of Smaug.
- **Why:** The adventure begins with a scholar going missing. The heroes are summoned, and tasked with going to the rescue.
- **Who:** The Company meets Thegn Jofur, a Barding dignitary, then goes seeking for the missing scholar, a famous Dwarf from the Blue Mountains by the name of Domi. In time, other dignitaries will make their appearance.
- **Themes:** An artefact representing the history of cooperation between City and Mountain now threatens to widen the present divisions between Men and Dwarves.

Adventuring Phase

This adventure is divided into six parts.

Part One - At the Court of the Grieving King

Here the Company meet Bard's self-appointed chief counsellor, Thegn Jofur. They learn that Domi, a famous Dwarf scholar from the Blue Mountains, has gone missing while travelling to Dale. Later, they may meet Dwalin, inquiring about the fate of the same studious Dwarf.

Part Two - To the Grey Mountains Narrows

The companions go west, looking for Domi. They find a member of Domi's party in need of rescue, and learn where the Dwarven scholar may have gone.

Part Three - Hunters in the Waste

The Company must travel into the Waste to seek Domi, who has been abducted. The kidnappers are sell-swords seeking the same treasure Domi was looking for, and are joined by allies most dire.

Part Four - The Mausoleum

The heroes uncover the lost mausoleum, but soon discover that there are worse things than Orcs and brigands on the Waste.

Part Five - Wings of Iron

When the heroes emerge from the mausoleum laden with gold and jewels, they will have to face a storm of iron! Out of the north comes revenge, riding wings of terror.

Part Six - Clouds Gather, Again

The Company meet with armed representatives of the Bardings and the Dwarves of Erebor, spurred into action by mysterious letters. Tensions threaten to erupt when the Dwarves and Bardings both lay claim to the treasure.

Epilogue

A wandering Wizard and his friend take council with the companions, to learn both the secrets of the past and the dangers of the present.

Secret Letters

Last summer, Domi, a famed Dwarven scholar from the Blue Mountains, made a great discovery while researching the royal annals of Durin's Folk: in an abandoned depository in the western Halls of the Dwarves, Domi found a travelling chest bearing King Thrór of Erebor's sigil. Apparently, the case was left behind after a royal visit, and thus saved from the ruin of Smaug.

The chest contained a thick bundle of letters, the correspondence between King Thrór and Girion, Lord of Dale. Of particular interest was a missive from Girion, describing his intention to employ a group of Dwarven stonemasons for the building of a mausoleum in the Northern portion of his realm, for the purpose of *"... receiving the mortal remains of my beloved eldest, who, as you know, died prematurely of a fever he contracted in Mirkwood. He loved the frontier and will rest forever there."*

Forgotten Secrets

Centuries ago, before the Dragon came, Girion, Lord of Dale, gave a necklace of five hundred emeralds to the Dwarves, as payment *"...for the arming of his eldest son in a coat of Dwarf-linked rings the like of which had never been made before..."*. Everyone in Dale and Erebor knows how King Dáin found the necklace in the Dragon's hoard and restored it to Girion's heir, King Bard, who in turn gave it to the Elvenking as a gift after the Battle of Five Armies.

What no one remembers is what happened to the coat of mail that the Dwarf-smiths forged. Legend says it was a wondrous artefact, *"...wrought of pure silver to the power and strength of triple steel."* Perhaps it still lies buried in the Northern Dalelands, hidden in the mausoleum that Girion built, along with the remains of the Lord of Dale's unlucky son?

The Coat of Silver Mail

Girion's son's mail coat first appeared in game terms in the *Rivendell Region Guide*, page 107, as part of the treasure reclaimed by Thorin's Company at the end of the Quest of Erebor. If this particular information has been introduced in a campaign (for example, the companions met Balin and he was described as wearing the Silver Ring-mail), then the Loremaster can specify that Domi also found proof that the son of Girion was buried with the famed coat of mail, and that the one that Balin has is but an essay of the ancient Erebor's armour-smiths before they completed the final product.

Type: Corslet of Mail
Craftsmanship: Dwarven
Banes: n/a
Qualities:
1. Ancient Cunning Make 2. Ancient Close Fitting
3. Runes of Resilience

At the end of summer, Domi wrote to King Bard informing him of his discovery and announcing his intention to come to Dale to confer with the king. The matter concerns Bard directly as the heir of Girion by right of descent.

Soon after, the scholar sent another letter to King Dáin Ironfoot, requesting the king's permission to meet the stonemasons of the Lonely Mountain: it is the scholar's hope that their ancient records will allow him to pinpoint the location Girion chose for his son's burial site.

Secrets Stolen

Lord Hakon, the devious courtier of Dale conspiring against King Bard (see below), has many informers, and it took only a day for one of them to deliver a copy of the letter sent to Bard. It didn't take much for Hakon to envision the negative diplomatic repercussions that poorly handling the matter of the treasure could produce.

After a brief meeting with the Sorcerer of Forod, a new plan for the ruin of Dale and Erebor was born. First, Lord Hakon will retrieve the stonemasons of Erebor's records with the help of a new servant that Morlach has placed under his command: a cunning Snaga tracker, expert in sneaking into forbidden places. Then, he will send the Snaga and a group of armed men to intercept and capture Domi on the road to Erebor.

Hakon is certain his men will be able to locate the mausoleum of Girion, travel there and take any treasure contained therein. In the meantime, he will busy himself in preparing a final, iniquitous act: pitting Bardings and Dwarves, one against the other, for the possession of Girion's treasures.

King Bard in 2959

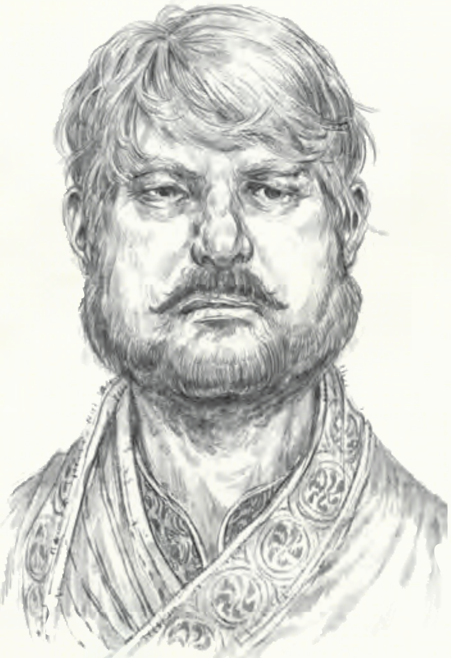
Beginning with the tragic events narrated in the Mirkwood Campaign for the year 2956, King Bard has become morose and withdrawn, turning increasingly grim as his years lengthen. By the year 2959 much of the royal business is handled by courtiers and lordlings while the king broods.

Within the last year, a minor noble, Thegn Jofur, has become one of the king's chief counsellors, competing with Lord Hakon for premiership. Though not formally appointed to the role, the two courtiers carry the greater part of the burden of running the kingdom whilst the king grieves. On his part, King Bard obviously welcomes Jofur and Hakon's presence and the help they provide.

– Part One –
At the Court of the Grieving King

The adventure begins when the heroes respond to a summons from King Bard to attend him in his palace. If the Company has ever seen the throne room before, they find it a darkened place now. The glass lamps that light the main hall have been turned low and it takes a while to adjust to the gloom.

When they reach the raised dais where the throne sits, the companions find it empty. They are greeted by Thegn Jofur instead, sitting on a chair set beside Bard's vacant seat. The Barding is a portly man in his late thirties, with fair hair and the red cheeks of someone who is either easily excited or overly fond of a good drink.



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A Plea for Help

The courtier stands up when the heroes approach, and greets them.

"Welcome, friends. You have been summoned here on a personal invitation from King Bard, on account of those valuable services that you have rendered to the realm in the past. I have heard of your exploits myself, and I am honoured to make your acquaintance. It is not easy to meet individuals that do not place their personal gain above all else... These are darkening days, and we have need of heroes like you, to light our way out of the murk. I am Jofur, son of Jormund, a humble servant of the king."

Jofur's manner of speech is pompous and elaborate, and it is difficult to say whether this is because he is unaccustomed to speaking in public, or if he is being sarcastic and mocking the companions — a **DC 13 Wisdom** (**Insight**) or **Intelligence** (**Riddle**) check reveals that Jofur is either honest to the point of being naive, or he is a consummate orator.

Playing Thegn Jofur

Thegn Jofur's benevolent aims have been delineated on page 6 of the Introduction. For the purpose of roleplaying his part, the Loremaster should keep in mind that it is the combination of Jofur's haughty manners and unadventurous spirit that make him appear foul, even if his intentions are fair.

Thegn Joffur is a Courtier as seen as page 46 on the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*. He will not use any of his special features as he is obeying a direct order from King Bard, who has personally asked for the Player-heroes to be summoned. If it was up to him, he wouldn't have resorted to asking the assistance of individuals he considers not much more than sell-swords. Jofur doesn't know the companions yet, but he doesn't have any loyal servants to spare for the mission and must thus trust the king's opinion. He knows well the sensitivity of the task, as handling it badly might endanger the relations between Dale and Erebor.

Expectations

Bard has indeed asked for the heroes personally, and Jofur has no reasons to doubt the choice of his king, but he will make up his mind on them based on the outcome of the audience nonetheless.

- +**1** if the Company has one or more Bardings or Men of the Lake. Jofur is more likely to trust his king if he has at least recommended someone local.
- +**2** if the Company asks about the well-being of the

king. He tells them that King Bard could not attend the meeting because he didn't feel well this morning and that he is seeing his physician. For locals, he might add that the king has not been feeling well for some time, and that Bard's personal sorrows threaten the kingdom.

- **-2** if at any time the heroes begin to speak of violent action or extraordinary danger. Thegn Jofur would rather have reliable and unexcitable guards for the Dwarven scholar instead of braggarts who go out of their way to look for trouble.

The heroes automatically win a further **+3** Expectation modifier, since King Bard has asked for them directly.

Introduction

An introduction is not strictly necessary as Jofur is aware of who the companions are. Should the heroes desire to ask Jofur about the absence of the king, or to make polite inquiries about his well-being, now would be the right time.

Interaction

After dealing with any opening questions, Jofur jumps to the heart of the matter, assuming a serious and confidential tone:

"An important Dwarven scholar was expected to arrive in Erebor from his home in the Blue Mountains. He was to be a guest of King Bard and sent a letter before leaving, describing his intended route and estimating a date for his arrival. He is now a week late, and we fear that some accident might be the cause of the delay.

What the king requires of you is simple, and proportioned to your abilities. Find the Dwarf, rescue him if he is in danger, and bring him to court, for he has important matters to relate to the king."

The companions at this point might wonder what a Dwarven scholar has to do with King Bard, and will probably want to know more about the matter at hand. Thegn Jofur does not intend to tell them everything right away though: they have yet to gain his trust.

The companions can question Jofur, but he seems strangely hesitant to answer their questions and they should feel like every question is an unwelcome imposition upon the courtier. The entries below indicate Jofur's answers and his estimation of the Company, based on the result of the Final Audience check:

Failure. Jofur wonders if King Bard made an error of judgement. Jofur mentions the minimum amount of information needed for the expedition to succeed; finding Domi and bringing him back will gain the companions rewards amounting to a total of 5 gold pieces each along with the gratitude of the king.

Success by 0-2. Jofur lets it slip that the Dwarves could be interested, by saying he is prepared to match any offer the Dwarves make. He adds that Domi wrote to both King Bard and King Dáin Ironfoot, but he stresses the fact that the business that was bringing the scholar to Dale was with King Bard.

Success by 3-5. Jofur admits that a group of Dwarves from Erebor are currently making inquiries in Dale. To reinforce his position, he tells the companions that what Domi was researching concerns the royal line of the Lords of Dale.

Success by 6+. Jofur seems to surrender to the inquisitiveness of the companions and adds that Domi's research concerns a lost mausoleum, built by Dwarves but supposedly containing heirlooms of the line of Girion.

INQUISITIVE DWARVES

The Dwarves of Erebor making enquiries in Dale are a dozen armed veterans from the Stone Guard, led by Dwalin, brother of Balin. The old Dwarf is in town to find Domi; he knew King Bard expected the scholar, and came to persuade him to come to the Lonely Mountain before striking any deal with the Bardings. He is not yet aware that the scholar has gone missing.

The Interrogation

Heroes approaching Dwalin about the matter at hand soon find themselves the object of an interrogation, as the Dwarf will immediately try to find out what they know of Domi and his mission.

He won't be subtle about it, as Dwalin is not a cunning courtier, nor a skilled orator — he is a warrior, and he is not afraid of making enemies out of the companions, if need be. The presence of the twelve Stone Guards should be enough to persuade any hero to oblige him. For more information on Dwalin, see page 26 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide.*

Dwalin will direct his questions to whomever proposes themselves as the spokesperson for the Company. The gruff Dwarf has little time for introductions, instead Dwalin will get right to the interrogation, summarised here in three questions. Each are resolved in sequence as contests. Dwalin and the interrogated companion each make **Charisma (Intimidation)** checks, with the higher result winning the contest.

Companions wishing to withhold information in their answers may make **Riddle** checks in place of Intimidation, but a failed roll will warn Dwalin that the hero is either lying or not saying everything (Dwalin is Suspicious). If this happens, then the Dwarf will say nothing, but considers the companions to be enemies.

The three questions are:

- Where is Domi?
- What have you been tasked to accomplish?
- What is Bard looking for?

If the companions lose an opposed ability check, then their answer must be truthful and complete, to the full extent of their knowledge of the facts. If they succeed, they can choose to answer truthfully, refuse to say a word, or give just a partial answer. A hero can also choose to lie, regardless of the results, but for every false answer a hero gains 1 point of Shadow.

Dwalin's Conclusions

At the end of the interrogation, the Dwarf will have an opinion on the companions concerning the matter at hand, based on the answers they provided to his questions.

To judge what they say from the point of view of Dwalin, the Loremaster must consider that, as Dwalin sees it, the ownership of any treasure found in the mausoleum is a matter that the Dwarves in Erebor should discuss first. If the companions find this debatable, Dwalin will conclude that they are agents of Bard and won't disclose any further information to them.

Dwalin also cautions the heroes not to think about keeping any Dwarven treasure for their own. If there are Dwarves in the Company, he will warn them about the punishment that a traitor deserves.

In general, if the companions answered his questions truthfully (or at least convincingly so), then Dwalin will see them as trustworthy, even if they are working against his interests. If they lied to him or withheld information and Dwalin is aware of it, then he will consider them treacherous. (Dwalin's opinion of the companions will have a bearing on the conclusion of the adventure – see page 63).

- PART TWO -
TO THE GREY MOUNTAIN NARROWS

The majority of travellers coming from the west heading for the Dalelands choose to avoid braving the depths of Mirkwood. They take the longer path leading round the forest to the north, across the slopes of the Grey Mountains, deeming it to be less dangerous. Unfortunately for Domi, the perils of the Grey Mountains Narrows proved to be enough to bring his journey to an abrupt end.

There isn't much choice for the companions if they wish to investigate the fate of the Dwarven scholar: they must trace the route he was supposed to follow, first finding that grey road that starts in the Northern Dalelands and heads towards the East Gap of the Narrows.

The Journey Begins

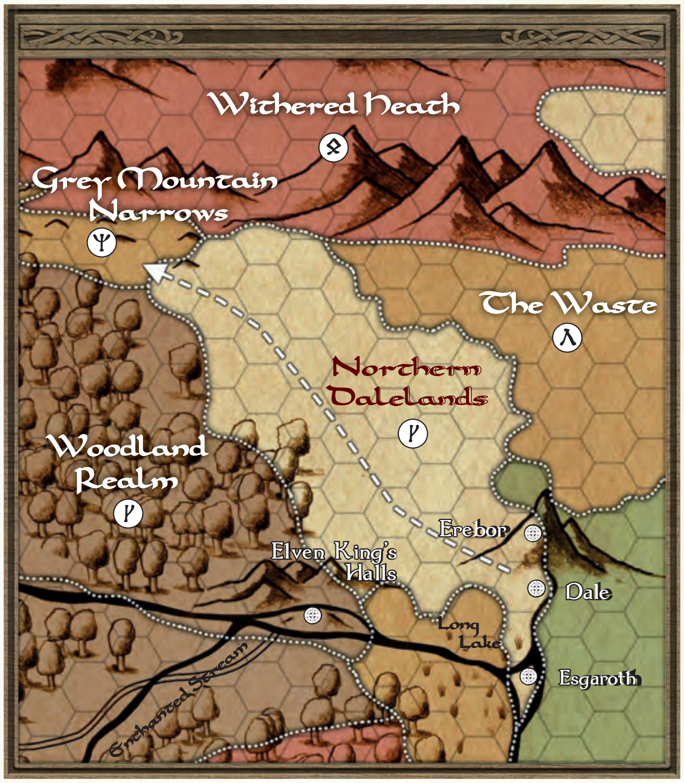
The journey to the East Gap of the Narrows covers a hundred miles across green hills and pleasant dales, dotted with many farms and villages. This leg of the trip takes five days, the Peril Rating is 1 and the companions will face 1 Journey Event.

Event Suggestions

Once known as the Desolation of Smaug, this region is more prosperous every year, the shadow of the Dragon now only a distant memory. But memories may sometimes return unexpectedly, as the following examples demonstrate. You can use these events in place of regular Journey Events.

The Weather Takes a Nasty Turn

It's been raining for days, and the green, hilly landscape of the Dalelands looks less pleasant when your boots are heavy with mud and your cloak is full of water. The Scout of the Company must pass an **Investigation** check, or each hero gains a level of Exhaustion.


Withered Heath
Grey Mountain Narrows
The Waste
Northern Dalelands
Woodland Realm
Erebor
Elven King's Halls
Dale
Long Lake
Esgaroth
Enchanted Stream

The Ruin

The companions pass a broken-down ruin by a placid pool. By the edge of the pool are the fresh remains of a Man and a Dwarf (not Domi but another unfortunate traveller), laying in positions that indicate their final acts were to drink from the pool. The heroes must each pass a Corruption check (**DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw) or gain 2 points of Shadow each.

A Long Shuddering Howl

After a few miles into the East Gap, the heroes see a fire to the south of the path as they set up camp for the evening. As they approach, they hear the howling of wolves. The wild beasts are circling a lone, barren tree, trying to get to a young man who climbed on top of it and who is desperately fending off the wolves using a flaming branch.

To save the man the companions must fight the wolves, killing them or driving them off. They are hungry and fierce, for they recently escaped the Elves of Mirkwood, and are ambushing any traveller they encounter in the Narrows.

There are three Wolves for each member of the Company; the beasts flee when half or fewer remain. (See the entry for Wild Wolves, page 111 of the *Loremaster's Guide*).

8

Final Words?

The man on the tree goes by the name of Clifford Sedger. He joined Domi and his following when the Dwarf passed through Bree. Cliff left his home seeking his fortune, and almost died in the attempt: he is bleeding from a wound to his leg.

When Cliff descends from the tree he has the time to ask the Company for a final pipe, then he collapses to the ground: the poor Bree-man has lost too much blood. A companion can wrestle Cliff from the grasp of death by healing him for 10 hit points or more. Cliff can still speak with the companions otherwise, but in such a case he will pass away before the night is over.

Cliff can share the following information with the Company:

- Cliff was accompanying a 'Dwarf-lord' from the Blue Mountains, travelling to Dale with a retinue of six other Dwarves (if the companions mention Domi by name, he confirms it's the same Dwarf). Cliff was in charge of taking care of the ponies the Dwarves bought in Bree.

- Two nights ago, armed men ambushed the caravan just before sundown. When the attack started, Cliff was badly injured by an arrow to the leg and left for dead. When he recovered his senses, he counted three bodies of Dwarves on the ground. Domi was not among them.

- The attackers were men, well-armed and ruthless, and among them was a small, squint-eyed creature, a Goblin perhaps. It was that creature that shot Cliff through the leg.

1

The Dawn Breaks

When the morning comes, the companions can start looking for Domi and his captors. If Clifford didn't make it, the heroes should take the time to give him a decent burial (failing to do so gains each hero a Shadow point). If the Bree-man is alive, he insists on going with them: he says that while he will certainly slow them down because of his wound, he knows his ponies well and he is sure he can follow their tracks better than anyone.

The tracks left by the attackers are easily found in daylight. They head north, towards the foothills of the Grey Mountains, only to head east after a few miles.

To stay on the path, the Guide must succeed in a **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival)** check each day. If Clifford is with the Company he grants Advantage on these checks. On a failed check, add one day to the journey as the Guide struggles to retrace the tracks of Domi's captors.

– Part Three –
Hunters in the Waste

Following the tracks of Domi and his captors, the heroes head back east. It takes them three days to cross the Northern Dalelands and get to the border of the Waste (four days if they are travelling with Clifford).

Then, the companions travel without coming in sight of Domi for another forty miles, marching across the Waste for four more days. This leg of the journey has a Peril Rating of 3 and the companions will experience 1d2 + 1 Journey Events — the dust storm (see below) might serve as the final Journey Event. Furthermore, each companion must make a Corruption check (**DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw). On a failure the hero gains a Shadow point, as the dreary nature of the land saps away at their spirit.

While in the Waste, the companions must continue to pick out Domi's trail amidst the broken and desolate landscape. They must make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** check each day. If Cliff is still with them, he provides Advantage on the checks.

8 Journey Event Suggestions

Here in the Waste the Desolation of Smaug endures still. It is a blasted land of ash, cracked earth, charcoal-fingered woods, and incinerated buildings, blackened by Dragon-fire. There is little animal or plant life, just a few mean shrubs, thorns, and endless beetles and maggots. Most of the water here is found in sulphurous pools.

Supply Shortage

The companions discover that the stress of the hunt has taken its toll beyond all expectations, leading them to indulge excessively in eating, drinking, or in some habit. Water or food is scarce now, or the cache of pipe-weed is nearly depleted. All companions must make a Wisdom saving throw or become temporarily Miserable for the length of the journey.

Fleabitten

A nasty breed of fleas has infested the companions' sleeping cots! The companions sleep poorly for nights on end, and suffer an unbearable itch by day. All companions must make a Constitution saving throw or gain a level of Exhaustion.

1 CATCHING UP WITH DOMI

After four days of marching across the Waste, fierce winds start blowing from the north at night, whipping up a storm of ashes. Fine grit swirls and gets everywhere: equipment, provisions, clothing, eyes and mouths, leaving an acrid taste. When the wind finally drops the following dawn, the companions realise they cannot find the tracks they were following.

- To relocate the missing trail after the storm has destroyed any sign of it, the Company must thoroughly scout the area. Any Scouts must make a **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to find the tracks. Cliff cannot aid in these efforts and each Scout can only make two checks per day. A Scout that voluntarily spends an entire day searching gains a level of Exhaustion but finds the trail just before nightfall and can lead the companions to it the next morning.

Regardless of the number of days it takes them to succeed, the heroes are fortunate in that the villains expect no one – the Company can easily catch them unawares. They find Domi and three other Dwarves on top of a low and wide hillock. They are busily digging in the ground with pickaxes and mattocks, watched over by a strange menagerie of creatures.

GOBLINS AND HOBGOBLINS OF THE WORST DESCRIPTION

When the companions arrive (if they choose not to attack the camp at first sight, they can be allowed an Arrival Roll to judge how the journey has affected them), they witness that two interested parties have come together in a loose alliance to seize the contents of the mausoleum:

One is a group of six tall, bony, Orc-like brutes, with long arms and flat faces: a hero proficient in **Shadow-lore** or possessing the Orc-lore trait identifies them as Hobgoblins, particularly ferocious creatures, haters of other breeds of Orcs and hated by them in return, and particularly powerful in the dark. See page 98 of the *Loremaster's Guide* for more information. They have approached the captors of Domi offering to guide them across the Waste, in return for a reward.

The other is the group of Cut-throats (see page 56) that captured Domi: a band of mercenaries on the payroll of Lord Hakon. They are brigands of the worst kind, they are led by Firbul, a cunning Goblin sent by Morlach. The group counts two Cut-throats for every companion, plus their Goblin leader.

Longo's Lieutenants

If the players have been playing the previous adventures presented in this supplement, then Vig, Kasper and Swain, the trusted right-hand men of the bandit Longo, may make an appearance. Always ready to make powerful friends, if they are still alive and free they have taken Lord Hakon as their new employer and have been sent to assist Firbul in leading the cutthroats looking for Girion's treasure.

The brigands have set up an encampment within a circle of large stones, a few yards away from the digging site, while the Hobgoblins squat beside a fallen and dried tree-trunk, on the other side of the hillock.

In the Nick of Time?

If the heroes succeeded in the prolonged search in the Waste in two days or less, they arrive before the entrance to the mausoleum of Girion has been fully unearthed. The Dwarves are chained and being forced to dig in the rocky ground, watched by the men that captured them.

If it took them more than two days to find Domi, the companions arrive as they are in the final stages of digging out the mausoleum, too late to save the Dwarves other than Domi: having outlasted their usefulness, they have been given to the Hobgoblins for them to feast upon. The sight of their broken bodies causes all companions to make a Corruption check (a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw) due to anguish. A failure gains a hero a point of Shadow. Fortunately for Domi, his captors decided the old Dwarf was too useful to kill yet.

8 OUTNUMBERED BUT NOT OUTWITTED

The Company is significantly outnumbered and may decide that a direct assault is not a prudent idea. The heroes need a clever plan, something that will let them reverse the odds. The next paragraphs summarise a few possible courses of action.

Free the Prisoners

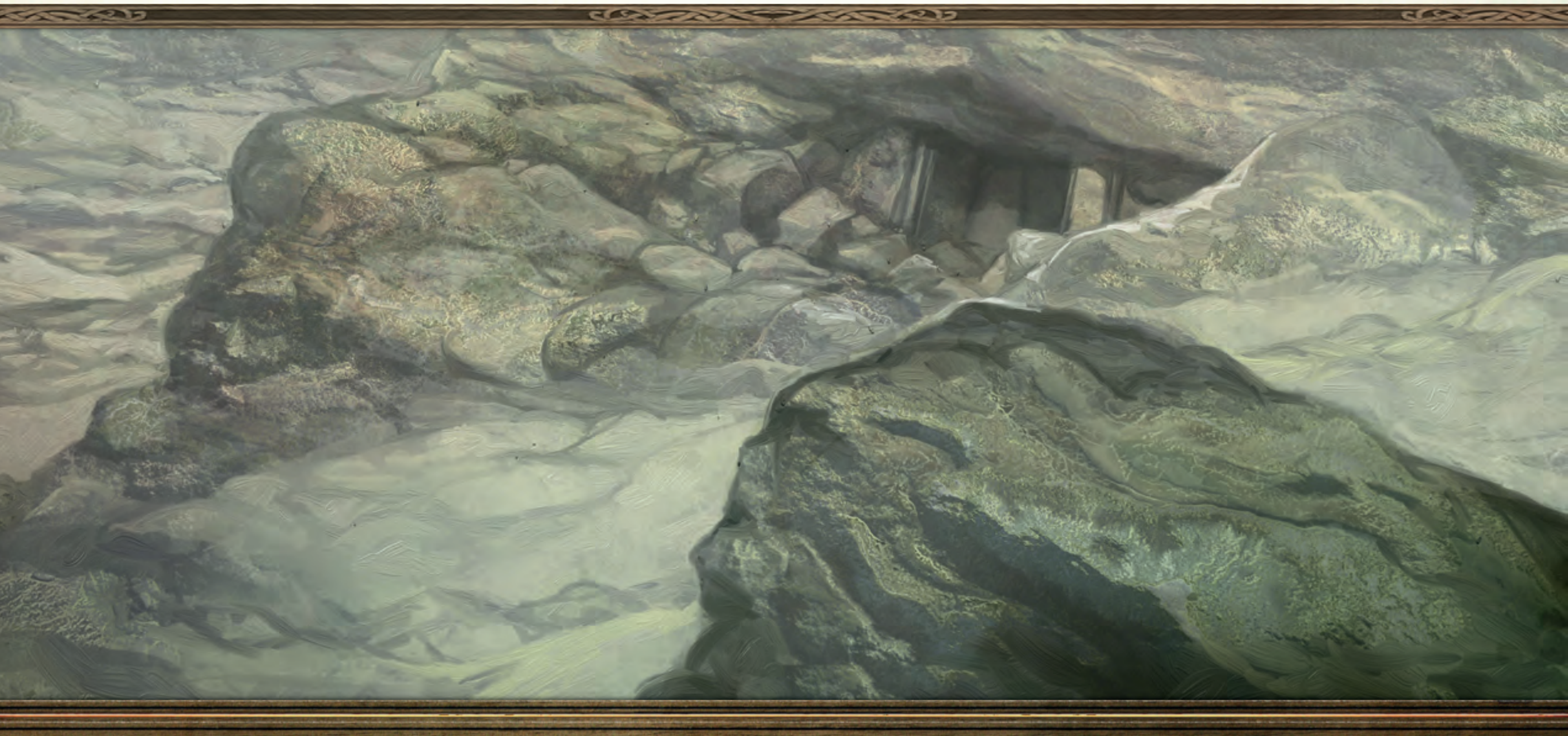
If the companions manage to get the captives free (if they are still alive), the three Dwarves accompanying Domi will leap upon the Hobgoblins with fury, wielding their digging tools to deadly effect and keeping the monsters out of the combat while the Company fights the rest of the foes. Their struggle will last for five rounds, at the end of which the three Dwarves will end up dead, having brought down four of the six Hobgoblins with them.

Keep them Bickering and Quarrelling

Should the heroes observe the group of adversaries for a few hours before taking action, they will see that three of the Hobgoblins and the Snaga tracker often quarrel over who will get 'the treasure' once the Dwarves have dug it up. The arguments always end with shouting and threatening, but no weapons are drawn. Is this something that clever heroes could find a way to exploit? Hobgoblins are not the brightest creatures among the servants of the Shadow...

Divide and Conquer

The companions can attempt to exploit the distance between the men-at-arms' encampment and the Hobgoblins, possibly to attack them separately, by setting up a diversion. Some examples include setting the encampment on fire or using Elven magic. Also, small groups of Cutthroats leave the encampment regularly on patrol, and try to find something to eat or drink in the unwelcoming Waste.



The companions could ambush a couple of patrols while away from the digging site (each patrol is composed of 3 Cutthroats; if they are not all successfully Surprised, one blows a horn to sound the alarm).

The Battle is On

The Loremaster must take into account the following elements when the companions finally engage the enemy:

- The pale light of the Waste is too weak to trigger the Hobgoblin's **Sunlight Sensitivity**. At night, they will use their superior ability to see in even the blackest night to gain any advantage. See page 98 of the *Loremaster's Guide* for more information.

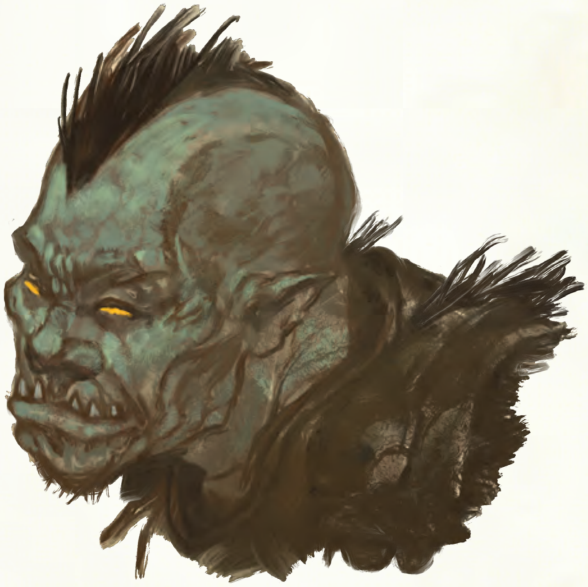
- If the Hobgoblins are out of the fight for any reason, or if the companions start gaining the upper hand in the fight, Firbul will look for a way out and quickly flee the battlefield. He won't spare the lives of his men to accomplish this, and he has another ace up his sleeve... (see page 60).

- If Firbul is killed or he deserts his men, then any surviving Cutthroats will rout and flee as soon as their casualties exceed the number of surviving fighters.

- Domi is too old for battle, and tries to stay out of it. He won't be of any use to the companions.

Firbul, Snaga Tracker

This small but guileful Orc serves the Sorcerer of Forod. The Nazgûl has found several ways to employ the Goblin's cruel cunning. (Firbul's superior capabilities have been represented using special features presented in the *Rivendell Region Guide*, page 69 and on).



Firbul

Small humanoid (orc-kind)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Armour Class 14 (Orcish Leathers)
Hit Points 31 (7d6+7)
Speed 30 ft

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 16
Languages Orkish, Westron
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Craven. If Firbul starts his turn with 15 or fewer hit points, he must make a **DC 10 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failure, he becomes Frightened until he finishes a short or long rest and must use his Dash or Disengage action to move away from any enemies. If movement is impossible, he will take the Dodge action.

Expertise. Firbul doubles his Proficiency Bonus for Perception and Stealth (included above).

Nimble Escape. Firbul can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of his turns.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Firbul deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Firbul that isn't incapacitated and he doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Firbul has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Wicked Cunning (1/day). Firbul can use his bonus action to add +2 to his Armour Class for the remainder of the combat.

Actions

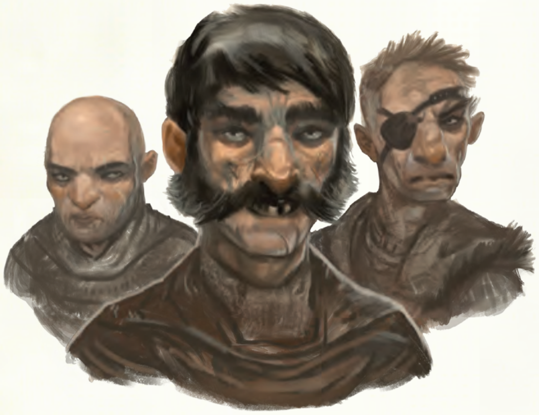
Multiattack. Firbul makes two attacks with either his knife or his bow.

Jagged Knife. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Bow of Horn. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage. The target must also make a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or be Poisoned for 1 minute

Cut-throats of the Dalelands

Firbul's men are among the many outlaws and misfits that Lord Hakon of Dale has been recruiting lately. Violent and ruthless, they resent any authority, but they nevertheless obey all orders the diminutive Goblin gives them, as they sense that behind Firbul lies a longer, deeper shadow.



CUT-THROATS

Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Armour Class 14 (Corslet of Mail)
Hit Points 51 (6d8+24)
Speed 30 ft

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +3, Survival +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Westron
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Berserk. After the first round of combat, the Cut-throat may make a single melee weapon attack as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Horrible Strength. f the Cut-throat makes a successful melee attack, they may use their bonus action to cause additional damage equal to their Strength modifier (+3) to the target.

Actions

Multiattack. The Cut-throat makes two attacks with their axe.

Axe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage or 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage when wielded with two hands.

Reactions

Reckless Hatred. When reduced to 0 hit points, the Cutthroat can, as a reaction, make a single melee attack against any target within 5 feet before succumbing to death.

After the Battle

At the end of the fight, the digging site will most likely be covered by the bodies of friends and foes alike. Above, the grey sky soon becomes speckled with black dots, carrion birds slowly circling the battlefield.

If the companions investigate the corpses of the Cut-throats, they find several clues indicating that these men must have visited Dale recently. In their pouches they carry food clearly bought in town, and wine flagons that any companion who knows the area can tell were bought from local wine sellers.

– Part Four –
The Mausoleum

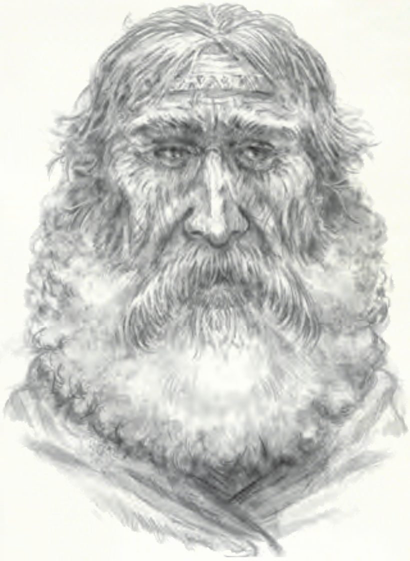
Domi the scholar and any surviving Dwarves will be extremely grateful to the Company for their intervention and thank the adventurers profusely. As soon as they learn that the heroes were not sent by fate but that they are on an actual rescue mission, the Dwarves manifest their firm decision not to leave and continue digging up the mausoleum. It would be a terrible shame not to complete the work they have started, after all the hardships they have been through.

If the companions arrived at the digging site before the entrance to the mausoleum was fully unearthed, Domi and his surviving companions will immediately set to work – it will take them another day to finish digging. If the companions arrived late, then the stair descending to the mausoleum is already visible at the bottom of a large hole dug through the layers of ash.

Domi the Scholar

Domi was born close to three centuries ago. He remembers Erebor's former glory, but he can see the fields of Azanulbizar and the Dwarf bodies that covered them just as clearly. This notwithstanding, Domi's curiosity for the lore and legends of the past is undimmed, compelling him to travel over mountain and vale despite his advanced age, to uncover the lives of the lost, their stories, and treasures.

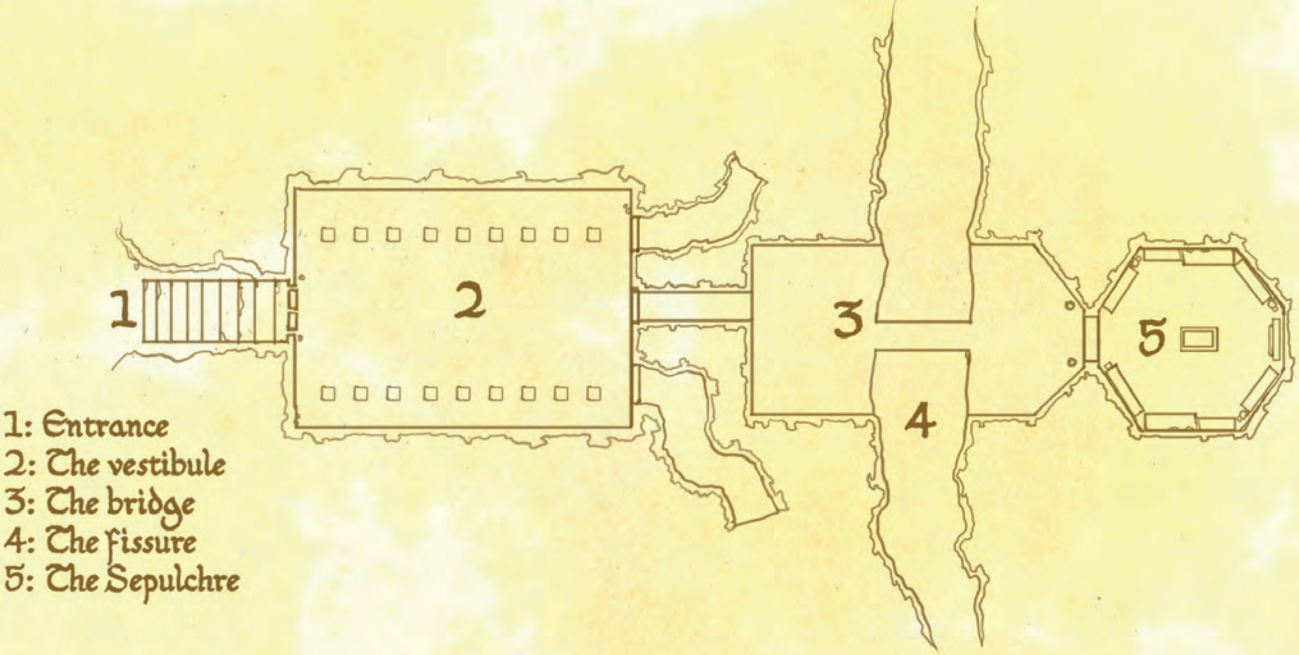
There is a quiet, wizened peace to Domi. He knows that he has lived beyond the years of many a Dwarf, and his days are now limited. This acceptance has brought him a brightness and joy for each day that he sees. His face is so filled with wrinkles as to appear like a cobblestone street, but his deep-set eyes still twinkle above his cloudy white beard.



The Tomb

The mausoleum was erected here, far away from the heart of the kingdom of Dale, to hide it from the grieving eyes of a father who lost his dearest son. Built with the aid of Dwarven stonemasons, it is a small architectural wonder, reflecting the greatness of a kingdom that only Dragon-fire could consign to oblivion.

The mausoleum is a subterranean building, an inverted construction with floors going below the ground, instead of rising tall above the surface.



The Entrance

Domi's companions have dug out a flight of stone stairs, descending into the ground. The steps are covered in heavy black ash, which takes some time to sweep away. At the bottom of the stairs, a stone door awaits, untroubled by time.

If the heroes are reluctant, Domi precedes down the stairs, jumping two steps at a time, suddenly as sprightly as a young deer. The other surviving Dwarves remain on the surface, exhausted by the digging.

The door is set into a dark grey wall. It is kept shut using four rope knots held by wax seals bearing the sigil of Girion. Dried by the arid air of the Waste, the seals crumble upon inspection. The door is not locked, and swings open when pushed, as if the centuries it laid under the earth were but days.

Beyond the door lies the vestibule, a dark, rectangular chamber, with a low and vaulted roof. When the companions make some light, they find that the walls are decorated with wonderful murals, depicting a Dalish lord holding court over many noble-looking men and receiving homage from Dwarves and Silvan Elves. It is certainly the work of a master craftsman, the shining example of an art now long lost.

On the corners of the wall opposite the gate stand two stone statues, portraying armoured men with folded arms and bowed head. No openings are visible on any of the walls.

The Hidden Doors

On the far wall of the vestibule, the Dwarven builders cunningly hid three doors. It takes a **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to locate the first concealed door. If a Dwarf is present (including Domi), the searcher has Advantage on the check. As soon as one of the doors is found, the other doors are easier to spot (**DC 15**). Each door opens by applying pressure at a particular point, and swings inward reluctantly with the the slow grinding of stone on stone.

Beyond each opening is a roughly-hewn tunnel that descends deeper into the ground; the tunnels to the left and right end abruptly, as the construction of the chambers they were meant to lead to was never completed. Only the central door leads to a burial chamber, that of the eldest son of Girion.

The Royal Mausoleum

The mausoleum was planned such that it might eventually house the sepulchres of Girion, Lord of Dale, and his two sons. Only one of the burial chambers was excavated fully, as the Lord of Dale was killed by the Dragon, Smaug, and his younger son outlived the realm he was meant to rule. From his line descends the current Lord of Dale, King Bard.

Players can guess the above information using their knowledge of Dale's history. Otherwise, a DC 15 Intelligence (Lore) check is required.

The Bridge

The tunnel starting from the central hidden door descends for a few yards, to reach a chamber with a floor covered by polished black marble tiles. Here, a cold breeze blows, emerging from a fissure dividing the chamber in two. A narrow stone bridge spans the fissure, whose dark depth is impossible to fathom. A **DC 10 Intelligence** check reveals that the bridge is safe. n a failure, the characters waste time trying to work out how secure the bridge is, or to find a way to traverse it safely.

An iron door opens on the far wall of the chamber, on the other side of the bridge. At either sides of the door hang two great braziers, wrought of black iron and suspended from the ceiling using long chains. The iron door is closed and locked, and no keyholes or opening mechanisms are visible.

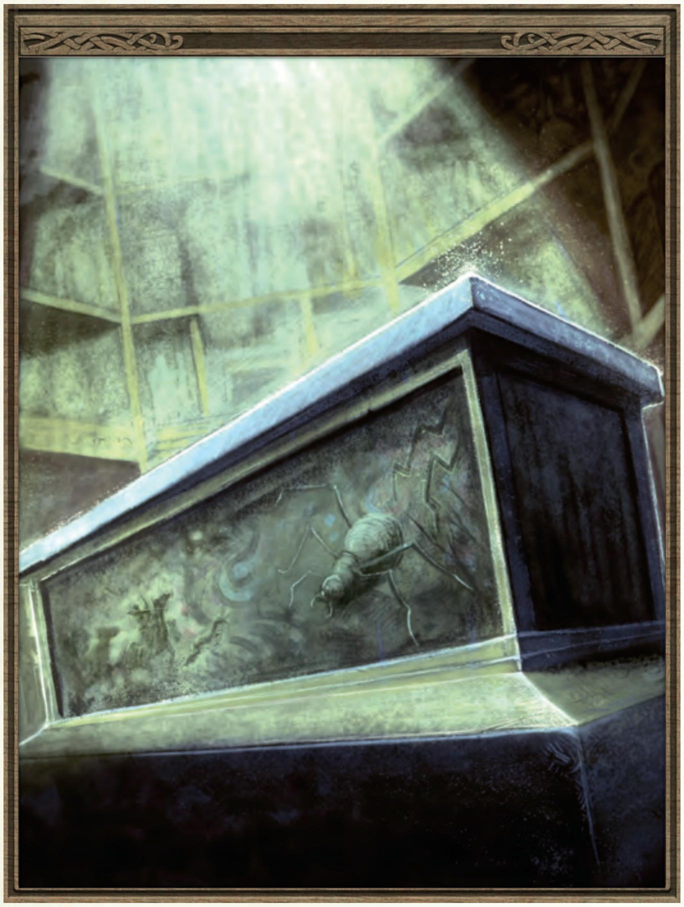
By some ancient Dwarven craft, the iron door opens only if both braziers are lit. Lighting a brazier requires a **DC 17 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check, as the cold breeze keeps extinguishing the flames as if it were guided by a malicious will (a hero possessing the Fire-making or Smoking trait may invoke it here to gain its benefits).

THE SEPULCHRE

The iron door opens to the resting place of the eldest son of Girion. It is an octagonal chamber, lit dimly by a narrow shaft falling down from an opening at the centre of the domed ceiling. When the companions enter, their feet disturb a deep layer of dust covering the floor. The air is stuffy, and feels warmer than the breeze blowing from the fissure outside.

The light of the shaft falls directly on a stone sarcophagus in the middle of the room. It is a massive, oblong block of limestone, upon which is laid a great slab of white marble. The slab is perfectly polished, its surface graven with runes that read:

He who lies here was a Prince among Men, first born of Girion, Lord of Dale



The sides of the sarcophagus are intricately carven, showing Dalish riders hunting deer in a forest. The fair faces of Elves hiding in the trees spy the passing hunters. The presence of a couple of hideous, many-legged creatures identifies the forest as Mirkwood.

The walls of the octagonal chamber are lined with shelves, laden with many wooden chests, ivory caskets and cabinets, glass urns and vases, golden bowls, dishes and cups. On the floor, along the walls, lie mounds of coins, trunks of time-spoiled clothes, boxes of jewels, fine pottery, old banners and ruined tapestries, and racks of blades, well-crafted and rusty, set alongside suits of armour.

Right behind the sarcophagus is the object of the adventure: hanging on a stand is the coat of armour of Girion's eldest son. When torchlight falls on it, the Dwarf-linked rings shimmer like flames upon water, for a moment filling the sepulchre with the blaze of ghostly Dragon-fire.

Adventurers, or Tomb-robbers?

Unfortunately for the adventurers, the riches that lie in front of them are not a treasure trove accumulated by a Dragon or by a family of thieving Trolls, but the grave goods of a prince whose lineage leads directly to the current ruler of Dale. This means that the heroes cannot rightfully claim anything they find in the mausoleum, and taking something is a Misdeed, causing each hero to gain 2 Shadow points each.

If this is not obvious to the companions and they start looting the tomb, Domi will clarify the issue for them: in a burst of outrage he will call them thieves, reminding them that their actions will call upon their heads both the enmity of the house of Bard and the everlasting hate of the Dwarves of Erebor!

Magical Treasure Rolls

If one or more companions are willing to pay the cost and run the risks detailed above (including the wrath of Domi), then the gold, gems and precious items contained in the tomb can be considered a hoard with a rating of 100**. If the Loremaster is using the rules presented in the *Rivendell Region Guide*, this is a good opportunity for the Loremaster to introduce a Wondrous Object or Legendary Weapon or Armour from the campaign's Magical Treasure Index. Something that can defend against, or harm, a Dragon could be a good choice, considering the adversary that the companions will face in the next adventure...

A Voice Filled with Evil and Horror

While the companions pause dumbstruck in front of the magnificence of the sepulchre, the Sorcerer of Forod arrives. Unclad and invisible, the presence of the Nazgûl is immediately perceived by everyone inside the mausoleum as a sudden chill, and the certainty that something terrible has manifested on the surface. Each hero must make a **DC 10** (**DC 15** at night) **Wisdom** saving throw or become Miserable while they remain underground. Miserable heroes have Disadvantage on attack rolls and automatically fail all Charisma ability checks (see page 183 of the *Player's Guide*).

If any companions remained outside the mausoleum, they can see nothing, but the feeling of dread is almost a physical sensation, like drowning in cold water: exposed companions must additionally resist his **Thing of Terror** feature (see page 154 Heroes made Frightened will then be targeted by his **Shadow of Fear** (see below).

After appraising the situation, Morlach leaves, but not before rending the air with his **Deadly Voice**: a deafening, high-pitched cry provokes all Frightened companions to become Stunned.

- Part Five -
Wings of Iron

The plan of Morlach was simple: he made his appearance to weaken the companions, so that they will be more vulnerable to the attacks he has planned with the help of Firbul.

Out of the Forgotten North

A lost breed of monstrous birds of prey still lives in the Grey Mountains, survivors of the rookeries of the fortress of Angband in the North. The Messenger of Mordor has summoned a flock of the creatures from their hideous eyrie, putting them under the command of Firbul the Goblin.

When the companions emerge from the mausoleum, they will soon see dark shapes in the sky, circling lower and lower, until it is too late to escape. Without a sound, the flock of great birds falls upon the Company, trying to shred them all to ribbons.

The Attack

There are as many Silent Vultures as there are companions, plus one that Firbul rides; he commands the great birds to attack the companions. If the Goblin is killed, the rest of the vultures will soon relent (after a number of rounds of combat equal to the number of companions still in the fight).

Silent Vultures

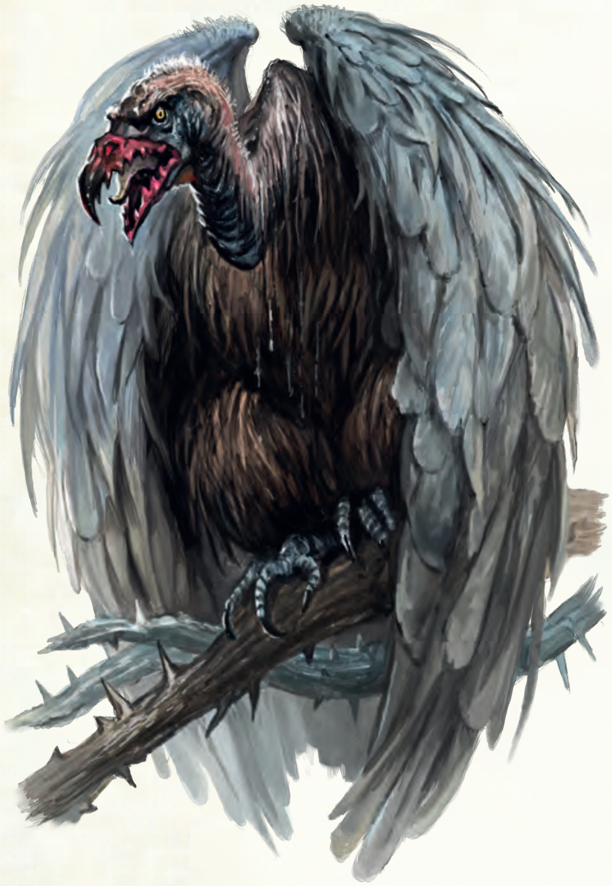
Bred by the Great Enemy uncounted centuries ago, possibly in mockery of the Great Eagles, these creatures are gigantic birds of prey, with wide wings, sharp talons and serrated beaks. The black feathers of their wings are hard as iron, and send sparks flying when they scrape stone, so that the Silent Vultures are able to set fire to a forest, if it helps them to ferret out their quarry. They emit no sound nor noise: legends tell how the Great Enemy struck them dumb when he grew tired of their screeching voices.

The Shadow of Fear

If the Ringwraith finds only Loremaster characters outside the mausoleum (for example, Clifford the Bree-man, or any of the surviving Dwarves accompanying Domi), the Sorcerer scatters them to the four winds in fear, and then singles one of them out to put the Shadow of Fear upon. The Ringwraith turns the unfortunate into a spell-bound agent, commanding them to steal the Coat of Silver Mail when the first occasion presents itself. If a companion is Frightened, the hero may instead become the subject of the compulsion and be forced to betray his friends by the Sorcerer.

Since it is not possible to establish beforehand what the companions will resolve to do with the precious armour (carry it with them, hide it, etc.), every Loremaster will have to decide by themselves how and when to trigger this eventuality, and which consequences it will generate.

Will the Dwarves blame the companions for the theft? Will Lord Hakon succeed in pitting Dale against Erebor? Will the disappearance of the main item of contention between the two factions unite the Dwarves and the Bardings against the common enemy?



The Journey Back

Hopefully, the companions will eventually emerge victorious from the fight, probably wounded and weary, still reeling from the dizzying sight of the magnificent treasure buried in the sepulchre. They have accomplished much of what they set out to do, but in front of them now lies a long journey south, one they cannot hope to make whist laden with treasure and also, potentially, in the company of Clifford the Man of Bree, Domi the scholar, and some other exhausted Dwarves in their train.

Before they set out, the companions need to take some decisions about the disinterred mausoleum and the treasure it contains. Concealing the entrance to the tomb requires half a day, but one possibility they might consider is to leave someone behind, to keep watch on the ruins.

Silent Vulture

Large Monstrosity

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Armour Class 15 (natural armour)
Hit Points 63 (6d10+30)
Speed 10 ft, fly 60 ft

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Fell Speed. The Silent Vulture may take a bonus action to Disengage and move up to its speed towards an enemy it can see.

Keen Sight. The Silent Vulture has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The Silent Vulture attacks once with its talons and then either attacks with its beak or uses Disgorge.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) piercing damage

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4+4) slashing damage and the target becomes Grappled (escape DC 13). Until the Grapple ends, the creature is Restrained and the Vulture cannot Grapple another target.

Disgorge (Recharge 6). The Silent Vulture regurgitates the contents of its poisonous belly in a 10-ft cone. Each creature in that area must make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 17 (4d6+5) acid damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one.

The Straightest Path

As far as the return trip is concerned, the companions have little option but to follow the shortest route back to more civilised lands. Their path will bring them southeast for about 30 miles, to the edge of the Waste, and then 50 miles south, to pass the Lonely Mountain to the east and finally reach Dale.

- Since the heroes have a clear destination in mind, they can consider this one journey with a Peril Rating of 2 and 1d2 Journey Events. However, one day after they have left the Waste behind, the companions have an unexpected encounter...

– Part Six –
Clouds Gather, Again

The Company is slowly approaching the Lonely Mountain travelling across the Northern Dalelands, when they spy a wide encampment filled with tents and banners, raised on a green field not far from a small village. The companions reach the field by crossing a wooden bridge, spanning a narrow watercourse. On the other side of the bridge, the companions are met by a group composed of both King Bard's Royal Archers in their head-to-toes black livery, and mattock-wielding Dwarves that clearly belong to Dáin's famed Iron Guard.

The guards seem to be expecting the companions, and without further ado escort them to the centre of the encampment.

A Council

It seems that, days after the companions left Dale, word of their secret mission surfaced and spread like wildfire among Dwarves and Men alike (the work of Lord Hakon, who secretly seeks to ignite a quarrel between Erebor and Dale).

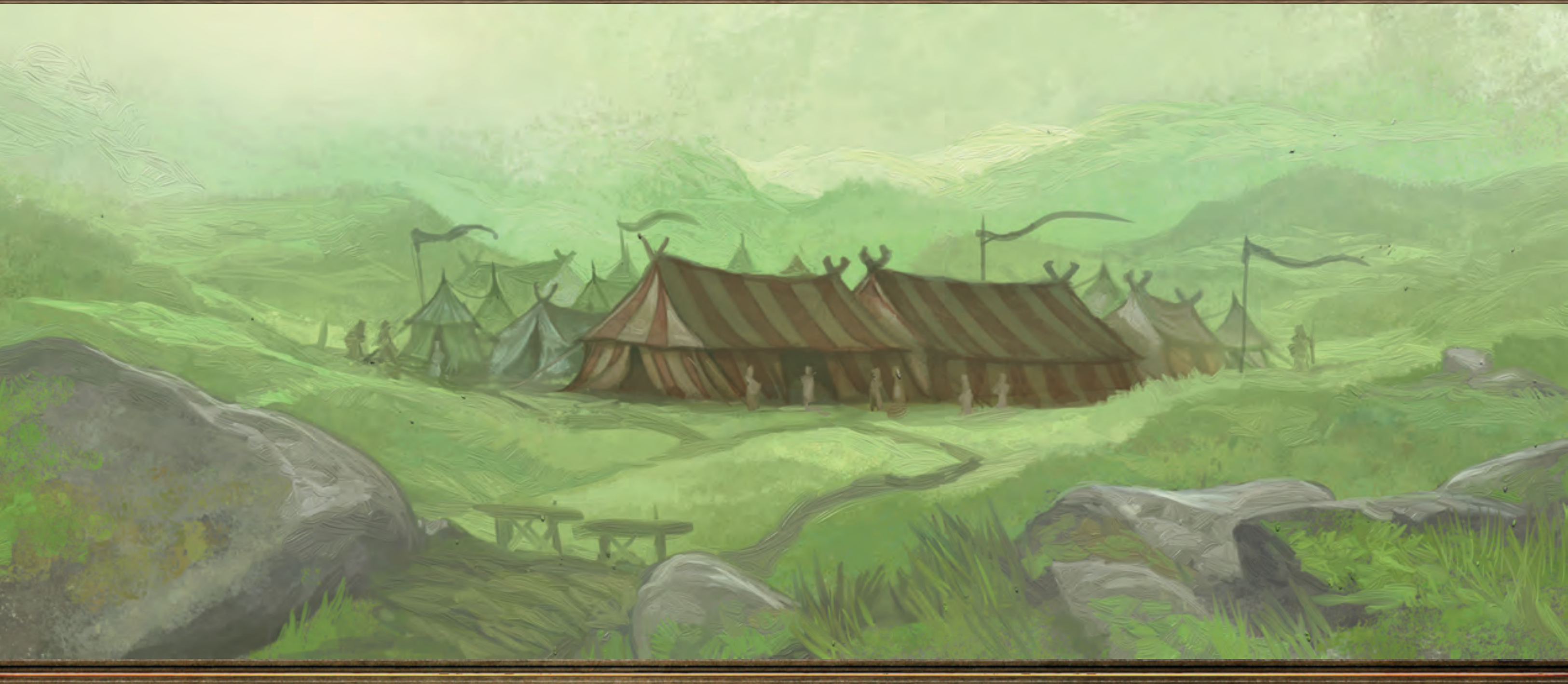
Even in the absence of an official confirmation to the rumour, a number of Barding lords and Dwarves took into their own hands the matter to find out what the heroes may, or may not, have found on their adventure. When Dwarves and Men met on the roads leading north, everyone suspected that someone else knew more than they did, and things seemed they could escalate very quickly. Luckily for everyone involved, Thegn Jofur of the Bardings and Dwalin of the Dwarves met and decided that all they could do for the moment was to sit and wait for the companions to return.

When the companions do actually arrive, both Thegn Jofur and Dwalin struggle to hide their surprise and relief. None of them really expected the companions to return, not to mention to see them appear with news of a fabulous treasure!
When they recover, they jointly announce to the heroes that they are called to participate in a council to *'discuss matters'* in the name of their respective kings.

A Knife's Edge

The companions will not be the only ones to speak at the council, but their intervention will be necessary to tip the balance in favour of one case or the other. Hopefully, they won't disgrace themselves in front of the assembled lords before they can make a difference.

To convince the assembled lords, the heroes will make a series of ability checks and keep track of their score. Each success adds at least 1 point to the score and an ability check that succeeds by 5 or more adds 2 points.



When the heroes have scored 5 points or failed three checks their time to speak is up. Consult the chart below for the results.

Introduction

The council is held at the centre of the encampment, in an open area dividing the two factions. Heralds announce that Thegn Jofur and Lord Hakon will speak for the Bardings, and that Dwalin and Domi will do the same for the Dwarves. The names of many other lords present are called, possibly some the Company knows, but they are here to witness, not speak.

The companions are asked to introduce themselves in front of the assembly, even if they are well-known to everyone present, having likely served both kingdoms in their time. The speaker for the Company must make either a **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Intelligence (Traditions)** check. A success on this check does not add to the Company's score but a failure does count.

When they are finished, Thegn Jofur rises from his seat. As the primary sponsor of their mission, he invites the heroes to recount their tale in detail. This requires a **DC 15 Charisma (Performance)** or **Intelligence (Traditions)** check. Riddle can be substituted for Traditions if the companions intend to withhold some information. This check counts both for the Company's score and their total number of successes.

Interaction

When the companions are finished describing what happened since they left Dale, the council moves to the most important matter, the true object of this gathering: to solve the problem of who is the rightful owner of the treasure of the mausoleum, and in particular of the Coat of Silver Mail.

Dwalin alone speaks for the Dwarves. Old Domi sits to one side noting everything that is being said and only correcting on points of historical accuracy. The presence of Domi makes things difficult for Dwalin, as the scholar cannot ignore the uncertain historical ground upon which the Dwarven case is built (see below). Distracted by Domi, Dwalin is quick to take offence, and Lord Hakon is cunningly able to oblige.

Lord Hakon speaks for the Bardings, as for the moment he enjoys a leading position in court, compared to Thegn Jofur. Jofur on his part takes every occasion to intervene, reminding everyone about his role as the first sponsor for the companions in their quest.

Lord Hakon's Voice

If this is the first time that the heroes have met Hakon and found themselves imprisoned by Lord Gunvar then allow them a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight or Perception) check. Heroes that succeed realise that it may have been Hakon's voice who said that they should be killed. This is, of course, impossible to prove.

Ancestral Rights

The key points of the debate are as follows.

- Dwalin presents the Dwarven case first. His speech is short and direct, with no concessions to persuasion or rhetorical skills (Dwalin firmly believes what he says to be right, and thinks that no oratory is required to make his point). In a few words, he concedes that it is true that all records chronicle how Girion paid for the Coat of Silver Mail with a necklace of emeralds, but he reminds everyone that the necklace was returned to Bard by Dáin after the Battle of Five Armies. Moreover, the very existence of the mausoleum has been discovered only thanks to the studies of a Dwarven scholar.

  'As a consequence, it is only fair to recognise that the Dwarves have the right to claim at least a share of the treasure, and that the Bardings hold no right whatsoever over the Dwarf-mail.'

- Lord Hakon presents the case for Dale, turning Dwalin's own words against him. His oratory is as eloquent and persuasive as Dwalin's was dry: in so many words Hakon states that Girion paid for the coat of mail in his time, a fact that cannot be denied. But what the Dwarves decided to do with Girion's necklace after that is of no consequence at all! Anyone not of the house of Girion claiming any right over the mausoleum or taking anything from it would be a thief and a liar.

  'The coat of Dwarf-linked rings and everything else the companions found in the tomb belong to the kingdom of Dale and nothing is due the Dwarves.'

It is indeed clear that both parties make claims that are hardly reconcilable. As soon as the orators are done with their speech, other voices are raised in support of this or the other argument. Old grudges flare, and accusations are exchanged. Survivors of the burning of Lake-town recall how it was Erebor's obvious wealth that brought the Dragon to Dale; Dwarves from the Iron Hills remind them how many of their kin laboured hard to rebuild their city of stone. Veterans of the Battle of Five Armies from both sides shake their heads, remembering how this same spirit almost brought ruin upon them all that day.

The debate promises to become increasingly fierce. Harsh words are on the verge of being exchanged that cannot be unsaid, and dire consequences loom. If the Player-heroes do not intervene, the argument will escalate to a degree that may harm alliances.

The Debate

The heroes' participation will help the council to reach a conclusion. There are three main options (unless the Loremaster or the players propose more) and the companions must choose to side with either the Bardings or the Dwarves, or opt for a middle ground.

The companions must choose one proposal to back. Convincing the council is a set of ability checks requiring a total of 5 points (as above). **Intimidation, Persuasion, Tradition**s or even **Performance** are all equally valid choices. The difficulty of the checks is indicated under each proposal entry.

1. *Recognise the right of the Dwarves over the coat of mail and a share of the treasure.* Even if it is debatable whether the necklace's restitution to the Bardings gives the Dwarves any right over the coat of mail, it cannot be denied that the treasure of the mausoleum has been found thanks to the efforts of the Dwarves, and of old Domi in particular.

   *This is the hardest option to drum support for, but is the one that is most likely to avoid consequences in the future. All checks are **DC 17.***

2. *Recognise the right of the Bardings to claim the whole treasure.* The tomb is clearly marked as that of the son of Girion, Lord of Dale. King Bard is Girion's heir, and thus he has a rightful claim over the coat of mail and the treasure.

   *This is the easiest option, as it's the one with the soundest proofs supporting it, but it will gain the companions the enmity of the Dwarves of Erebor loyal to Dwalin. All checks are **DC 15**.*

3. *Convince the Bardings to leave the Coat of Mail to the Dwarves, regardless of any point of law, as a token of goodwill from a loyal ally.*

   *The third option is difficult, as it finds a strong opposition in Lord Hakon and his loyal Barding supporters. All checks are **DC 16**.*

The Decision

When the players are finished trying to affect the council's decision, Lord Hakon and Dwalin call for a vote. If the companions accomplished their ability checks, the assembled dignitaries express their decision accordingly, choosing the option sponsored by the heroes. Otherwise, Lord Hakon has it his way, and the Bardings claim the whole treasure (option 2).

The following entries detail the consequences of the three possible decisions.

- ***Option 1.*** The council gives in to the uncompromising position of the Dwarves, possibly committing an injustice, but saving the day and keeping the peace. A minority among the Barding nobles criticise the companions for their stance, but their hostility for the moment only takes the form of angry mutters. (Lord Hakon is disappointed, but will attempt to add fuel to this fire in the future).

- ***Option 2***. The council rewards the speech of Lord Hakon, denying the Dwarves any right over the coat of mail or the treasure. Many voices raise in outrage from the Dwarven camp, and Dwalin leaves to return to Erebor, with a dozen followers in train.

  To Lord Hakon's great delight, from now on Dwalin is considered to hold a grudge against the Bardings and the companions, regardless of whether they sponsored this option or if they opposed it, but failed to stop the decision. If the heroes meet the Dwarf in the future, they will find him ill-disposed towards them, to the point that he will do anything in his power to foil their endeavours.

- ***Option 3***. The Dwarves are given the coat of mail as a token of good friendship. Everyone but Lord Hakon is happy.

- ***Another Option***. If the Company found their own way to a peaceful resolution, the Loremaster must determine the consequences, using the information above as a guide.

- EPILOGUE -

Later in the day, as all the dignitaries that participated in the council slowly start making their way back to their respective manors and palaces, the companions are discreetly approached by a hooded young man and invited to follow him to a pavilion erected close to the bridge. Companions who have visited King Bard in the past may recognise the messenger as a minstrel from the royal court of Dale.

Inside the pavilion, the companions are probably surprised to see Gandalf the Grey, seated on a stool smoking his pipe, handing a tobacco-jar to Balin, son of Fundin. The Wizard welcomes the companions with a smile, as he invites them to enter the pavilion quickly, and closes the tent behind them tightly. Balin bows deeply, before sitting next to Gandalf and starting to light his pipe.

"*So, it was quite a dreadful business,*" says the Wizard, "*and it nearly was disastrous! Tell us a bit about it...*"

Gandalf and Balin wish to draw some conclusions about the current relations between the Bardings and the Dwarves of Erebor, and want to do this with the help of the companions. Based on how the council went, the two will either congratulate the heroes, exchange furtive, worried looks, or, in the worst case, even shake their heads in bitter disapproval.

Consequences

If the heroes performed poorly in the council, the relations between Dale and Erebor are chilled for the immediate future. Both communities suffer as mutual suspicion festers: trade slows, and Dale can no longer automatically rely on immediate military assistance from Erebor or the Iron Hills as grudges old and new will make Dwarven leaders slow to act. Meanwhile, the Dwarves of Erebor start laying in provisions and consider importing foodstuffs from further abroad. Any Bardings or Dwarves gain one point of Shadow.

Neither Bard nor Dáin will allow war over a single coat of mail, no matter how fair, but their friendship is, for a time, strained. In the short term, Bard likely gains the coat, and Lord Hakon's reputation rises even higher among the king's counsellors.

If the heroes are very successful at the end, Lord Hakon's hopes for a political future are dashed and he is banished from Dale. He returns to his estates to plot, gather brigand forces, and make further alliance with the Orcs. The Company will have made an enemy of Hakon. He will maintain a cold anger towards them, and seek revenge at a later time of his own choosing (Lord Hakon will restore enough of his political influence to trouble the heroes in **Shadows in the North**).

Regardless of the outcome, the Company has a decent chance of being well regarded by both Dale and Erebor. Even if they ultimately sided with the Bowman, King Dáin respects loyalty and he will not quickly forget the lives of any Dwarves saved. Likewise, King Bard understands all too well that duty can be a heavy burden and will not hold a grudge against a Dwarf companion that spoke for Erebor.

-Sleeping-
Dragons Lie

For Heroes of Level 9 or 10

- **When**: After the events of **The Watch on the Heath**, in the *Wilderland Adventures* supplement. It is quite likely that a few years have passed; the assumed starting date is 2960, in late spring.
- **Where:** Erebor, and the Watchtower on the edge of the Withered Heath.
- **What:** The Company are sent to slay a Dragon that slumbers in the ruins of the Watchtower.
- **Why:** Smoke is rising from the Watchtower, and the sages agree that this is an ill omen – for Dragon-smoke one day brings Dragon-fire the next.
- **Who:** King Dáin Ironfoot places a bounty on the wyrm's head.
- **Themes:** A Dragon stirs in the North, made bold by Morlach. If the heroes do not triumph then the divisions between City and Mountain will be set alight by Dragon-fire.

Adventuring Phase

The adventure is divided into seven parts.

Part One - Smoke On The Horizon

King Dáin fears that the Dragon of the Watchtower is growing too strong, and will soon turn his greedy eyes south to Erebor, as Smaug did before. He therefore calls for heroes to strike before the wyrm turns.

Part Two - On Dragons

The Company – and the Loremaster – are invited to consider Dragons, and the many problems associated with them.

Part Three - The Shadow of his Wings

On their journey north, the companions risk betrayal by their rivals on this quest.

Part Four - Across the New Desolation

Leaving the lands of men, the Company must brave the peril of the New Desolation around the Watchtower.

Part Five - The Passage of the Gorge

Approaching the borders of the Withered Heath, the Company must evade or defeat the Dragon's Orc-servants.

Part Six - By Stealth and Guile

The Company arrive at the ancient Watchtower, and make their way through its halls in search of the enemy.

Part Seven - Slaying the Dragon

Finally, the companions face the Dragon, and either defeat it or perish.

Epilogue

The Dragon is dead! Or is it not? If victorious, the heroes earn honour and renown.

The Nature of the Beast

Wilderland Adventures introduced a Dragon named Raenar, a terrible Cold-drake from the North that slew King Dáin II Ironfoot's great-grandfather (also named Dáin) at the gates of his kingdom in the Grey Mountains. Depending on how the final adventure played out, Raenar might be:

- Dead, at the hands of the Company or in battle with the vile Gibbet King.
- Alive, having heeded the companions' warning and avoided the Gibbet King's sorcerous trap. In such a situation, Raenar skulked around the mountains for a few years before taking up residence in the Watchtower. The Company's warning means Raenar will be better disposed towards them when at last they meet (see page 92).
- Alive, having defeated the Gibbet King. In this case, Raenar made the Watchtower of Zirakinbar his home immediately.

If Raenar was slain in **The Watch on the Heath**, then his place in this adventure is taken by Wruenele, a young and brash Fire-drake, hatched in some forgotten nest in the north. Bravest and biggest of his brood, Wruenele flew south with the intention of using the abandoned Watchtower atop Zirakinbar as his lair until he grew big enough to rival Smaug the Mighty. Although he can breathe hot fumes, his fire is as yet weak and thin compared to the blazing conflagration of Smaug. If you have not incorporated the events of The Watch on the Heath, use whichever Dragon you prefer.

The two Dragons are effectively interchangeable throughout most of this scenario, so when a passage refers to the Dragon, it applies to either candidate for arch-villain. When we need to refer to a specific Dragon, we shall use his proper name of either Raenar or Wruenele (for brevity, we must dispense with the honourifics and titles that are properly used when referring to a Dragon!).

Wasn't Raenar a Cold-drake?

The adventure is written presuming that the new draconic threat to the North is of the fire-breathing quality. Since the Great Worm Raenar was presented in *Wilderland Adventures* as a Cold-drake, a wingless wyrm unable to breath fire, then the Loremaster has two options if they want him to be the main antagonist:

- If you are playing *Erebor Adventures* as a campaign, Raenar becomes a Fire-drake by means of powerful dark magic, performed by Morlach, the Sorcerer of Forod. The Ringwraith sets Raenar's poisonous fumes alight using ancient Morgothian spells, and gains a new ally for Sauron.

- The second option is to consider that Cold-drakes are Dragons whose fire has gone out, and that they can grow hot again (see Hearing Stories about Dragons on page 72), given enough time. When Raenar first appeared he was diminished in size and strength by a long slumber, and now he is approaching his full stature again.

– PART ONE –
SMOKE ON THE HORIZON

In the years prior to this adventure, travellers in the desolate lands north of Erebor report seeing wisps of smoke on the distant horizon. Campfires, perhaps, they thought, but the next year the smoke plumes were darker, larger, and fouler, like the grumblings of a volcano. At the same time, whispers came back to Erebor that a Dragon may have returned to the North, but those rumours were unsubstantiated by any proof. Still, Dáin could not sleep easily, and he began to dream of smoke against the winter sky. The King under the Mountain consulted his sages, learned men and women steeped in Dragon-lore. He spoke, too, to alchemists and hunters from Dale who dare to hunt young and bestial Cold-drakes out on the Waste, and even to those Elves whose memory reaches back even unto the Elder Days before the first Dragon arose to trouble Men and Dwarves alike. He even sought the counsel of passing Wizards. All agreed that sleeping Dragons are best left alone, but on the question of Dragon-fire there was no consensus.

Some said that the fire of Dragons was placed in them by the Enemy when the monsters were first bred in the pits beneath the mountains, and that they have only a certain reserve of hot breath, and that when this reserve is emptied they wither and die. Others claimed that Dragons draw strength from gold, and that the heat of their flames depends on their greedy triumphs. Still others said that the Enemy made different breeds of Dragons, hot and cold, winged and wingless, and that the different breeds cannot intermingle any more than Men and Elves (and that brought Dáin little comfort, for he has heard the Lay of Lúthien, and dreamt of a monster as hideous as the Half-elven are fair). No-one, not even the Wizards, could assure Dáin that a Dragon's fire could not grow in strength, or or that a Cold-drake could not set its breath alight in time.

THE KING'S SUMMONS

If the Company enjoy a good reputation in the North, they are contacted by one of the king's messengers (a raven, if they are in the wilderness, or a herald, if they are at home). Dáin's messenger describes the quest to the Company, and bids them visit the Dwarven king at Erebor so that he may speak with them more fully.

Otherwise, they may hear of an opportunity to serve King Dáin through their contacts or patrons. Dáin is careful not to reveal his intention to destroy the Dragon – he fears (correctly) that the Dragon might have spies and agents who would give the monster advance warning if he publicly called for Dragon-slaying heroes.

MEETING THE KING

King Dáin meets with the Company in his halls beneath the Lonely Mountain.

Motivation

In addition to Dáin's usual concerns (see page 19 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*), the dreams of Dragon-fire weigh heavily on the king.

Expectations

Add the following to Dáin's regular Expectations:

- +**1** if there are any Dwarves in the Company.
- +**1** if the companions revealed Niping's treachery in Of **Hammers & Anvils.**
- +**1** if they've met a Dragon before, +3 if they've *killed* a Dragon.
- -**5** if the Company betrayed Dáin's trust and failed to keep the mission secret (only if they were informed of Dáin's plans in advance by messenger or herald).

Introduction

The Company spokesperson must make an Introduction check as normal. If the Company has slain a Dragon, this check is made with Advantage.

Interaction

Dáin describes the threat of the Dragon to the Company. He believes that the Dragon's fires are waxing, and that soon its breath will blaze as fiercely as Smaug's — and, as Dragon-greed and Dragon-fire are two sides of the same coin — a fiery Dragon is a hungry one, this is bound to bring devastation on Erebor. The Dragon must be killed or driven away before its fires grow too strong.

Dáin recommends that the Company travel in secret and as swiftly as possible, in the hopes of reaching the peak of Zirakinbar before it is too late. Such a recommendation is reasonable.

He also says that he cannot risk giving any support or assistance to the Company, for fear of some spy seeing the hand of the king and warning the Dragon. This paranoia may seem unreasonable to the companions, so a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check convinces the king to give the Company supplies and mounts for the journey, as well as an escort to the edge of the Dale-lands. This allows the Company to skip *Preparing for the Journey* (page 72).

Final Audience Check

Once the speaker for the Company has made the Final Audience check, compare the result to the list below.

Failure. Dáin doubts the Company's competence and will speak openly of seeking other groups to destroy the Dragon. The heroes may still brave the quest, and the king will grudgingly give them a partial reward (treasure worth 5g each). Of course, at that rate, they may be better off taking the Dragon's entire hoard for themselves, earning a huge fortune... along with the eternal enmity of the King under the Mountain and his folk.

Success by 0-2. As a reward for slaying the Dragon, Dáin offers each companion gold and precious gems amounting to 15 gold pieces. He warns that the Dragon's hoard, if such a thing exists, is rightfully the property of the King under the Mountain and must be returned to him intact

(depending on the events of **To Dungeons Deep** this may be a particularly difficult conversation).

Success by 3-4. In addition to the reward, the heroes may select one of the benefits listed below.

Success by 5. As the previous entry but the companions can select two benefits.

Success by 6+. The companions can now select three benefits in addition to the base reward.

As the meeting with the king comes to a conclusion, the companions may – depending on their level of success – learn more about their mission or negotiate a higher reward. The following benefits are available:

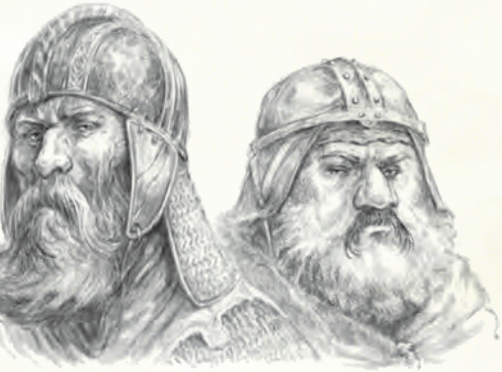
- The heroes may realise they will not be alone on the quest and learn about *The Other Hunters* (see below).
- The companions may want to learn more about the Dragon's lair (see *Secrets of Mazarbul* on page 70).
- The Company might wish to research their foe (see *Hearing Stories about Dragons* on page 72).
- The heroes might ask for a richer reward and increase Dáin's offer by 10g per companion (see below)

9 The Other Hunters

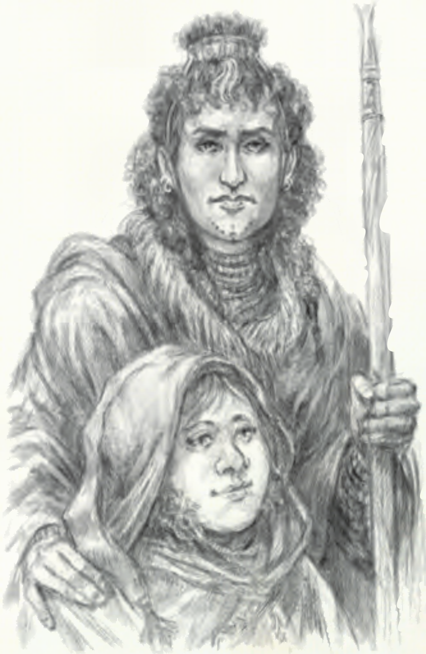
In addition to the Company, there are three other groups in Dale who plan to slay the Dragon and claim the bounty. The Company may learn the identity of these rivals from the king, or by spending a day to gather information in Dale, requiring a **DC 15 Intelligence (Riddle)** check to worm the truth out of various vendors and innkeeps.

All of these rival hunters are already on the road, and have a head start of a day or two on the Company.

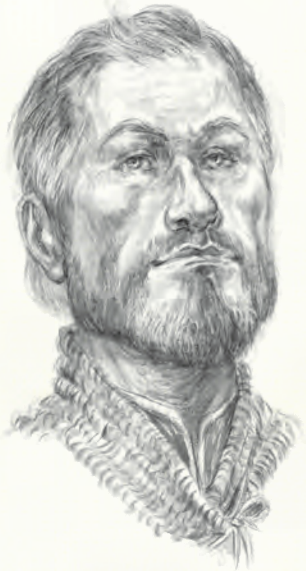
- **The Brothers Khuldrim**: Despite the name, there are rather more than two or three of them, and they're not related by blood. These are a company of Dwarves led by a Dwarven warrior named Khuldri. Once, his brother, Skuldri, fought by his side, hence the name of their band. Skuldri and most of the rest of the group perished on another quest. Now their places have been filled by new and untried adventurers. Secretly, some of these new companions plan to use Khuldri's good name and reputation as a cloak to hide their own foul deeds. The Brothers are encountered again on page 75.



- **Greystroke and Skirfira:** Greystroke is a human hero from lands unknown; tall and grim, bitter and fell-handed, she carries an Elven great spear called *Nameless* that she took from a Troll's treasure-hoard (so called because Greystroke cannot read Elf-letters, and never lets the spear go so that anyone else can read it). She rarely speaks. Her boon companion is a young Dwarf of the Iron Hills named Skirfira Silvertongue, a scholar and poet known for her merriment (and for being one of the very few Dwarf-women to defy convention and travel openly). These two show up twice in the adventure, on pages 74 and 89.



- **Lord Elstan:** The First Captain of Dale, commander of the Royal Barracks, Elstan is widely known in Wilderland. He wears shining Dwarven armour and bears a mighty shield, the Aegis of Dale, inlaid with truesilver and steel by the Dwarves in days of yore, blazoned with the sigil of the River Running. He is a hero of antique mode, like one of the fabulous toys of the Dale-market sprung to life. Lord Elstan is not as young or strong as he once was; he snoozes in his armour in the summer heat, and catches cold more quickly in winter. Still, he is the king's champion and determined not to fail. There is a further description of Elstan on page 52 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*. He meets an unpleasant fate on page 76.



Secrets of Mazarbul

The Dwarves' record vaults contain a book that describes the Watchtower on the heath where the Dragon lairs. The original book was written in an obscure dialect of Khuzdul, but Skirfira Silvertongue has translated the text into the common tongue. In the introduction she laments the loss of a page in the original that contained a plan for the Watchtower.

If the Company request it of Dáin, he permits them to read this new translation, which takes a day. If the companions once long ago read the original, they find that Silvertongue's work is much easier to understand. The companions learn the following secrets:

1. **Secret Entrance:** There is a concealed entrance into the cellars of the Watchtower. The key to the door is 'a polished axe, thrice'.

2. **Traps:** The Great Hall is guarded by a mighty stone. Should enemies breach the gate, the stone can be lowered to block the entrance tunnel, protecting the Watchtower from the mightiest foe.

3. **Treasure Vault:** A secret vault was built when the tower was carved out of the mountain. It is in the last bedchamber on the left, and the entrance is hidden in the floor.

The book also mentions other aspects of the Watchtower, like the fabled Chamber of Winds that channelled the howling winds of the mountains into music, or the Raven's Perch, but the Dragon has smashed the upper levels of the fortress and those wonders are lost forever.

– Part Two –
On Dragons

Before departing on their journey, the Company may consult with sages or make other preparations for the quest. The longer they linger, the greater the risk that the Dragon's fires grow hotter – but only a fool would go into the Wild without so much as a handkerchief.

The Dragon's Eye

The *Rivendell Region Guide* presents rules for the Eye of Mordor, representing the Dark Lord's hostility to the Free Peoples, and how he can more easily spy the presence of large companies and powerful heroes. In this adventure, the Dragon is a more pressing danger, so a variation of those rules is used.

The Dragon Watches

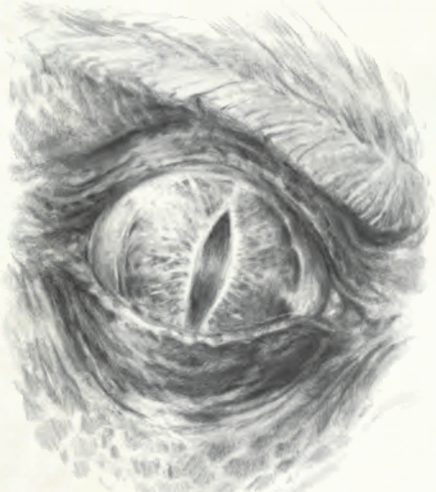
Much like the Eye of Mordor, these rules measure the Dragon's Hunt score and the Company's Veil score.

The Dragon's Hunt

The Hunt score measures how aware the Dragon is of the heroes. As the companions leave Erebor, the Hunt score starts at the highest Proficiency Bonus of the Company, modified as follows:

+**0** for each Hobbit
+**1** for each Man or Elf of any kind
+**2** for each Dwarf of any kind
+**1** for each Legendary Weapon or Armour

If the Company is indiscrete about their plans, word will reach the Lord Hakon's ears and soon make it to Morlach and thence to the Dragon. Increase the Dragon's Hunt Score by +4 if the Company speaks too loudly of their secret mission from King Dáin.



Raising Awareness

The Dragon's Hunt score increases by +1 each day that passes. (This is a change from the regular Eye of Mordor rules, and reflects the need for haste in this adventure.)

The Hunt score increases by +1 when a hero rolls a natural 1 on an ability check.

Other events can also increase the Hunt score; such instances are noted in the individual encounters. The Loremaster should also increase the Dragon's Hunt score if the companions attract undue attention through odd behaviour, loud boasting, profligate spending or other strangeness.

Unlike the Eye of Mordor, the Dragon's awareness of the Company is not increased through Shadow gain or the use of magic.

When the Hunt score increases, the Company must make a Dragon Awareness check, which works the same as an Eye Awareness check. On a failure, the Dragon goes hunting (see *Hunt Episodes*, below).

The Veil

Use pages 112-3 of the *Rivendell Region Guide* to determine the Company's Veil score. Note that if the heroes are indiscreet, then the Dragon will know their mission and the -4 modifier applies.

After a Hunt

The Dragon's Hunt score resets to its starting value after a Hunt Episode, as the Dragon assumes it has dealt with the threat. However, the Dragon's flames grow hotter each time it hunts (see below).

The Growing Fires

As the Companions draw closer to the Dragon's lair, they see signs of his growing fires. The flames grow brighter over time, as the Dragon's power intensifies. waxes wroth. The visible signs depend on the number of Hunt Episodes that have occurred.

0: The air is unwholesomely hot and heavy.

1: A column of black smoke stains the horizon, giving the Company a clear mark for which to aim.

2: The small scrub forests near the Watchtower are alight, and their flames can be seen for miles. Afterwards, all that remains is a blasted and withered landscape of skeletal ashen trees.

3: The smell of ash and sulphur on the wind grows stronger. The stench is foul and at times makes it hard to breathe. Smaller jets of steam burst from cracks in the ground, as the Dragon's growing power corrupts the very land.

4+: A hellish glow can be seen at night from within the watchtower, as though the heart of the mountain is on fire. Rumblings that might be earthquakes or the passage of the Dragon tremble through the earth.

Hunt Episodes

Unfriendly Eyes: Crebain and other unfriendly birds fly overhead. The Company's Look-out may attempt to hide from these watchers with a **Stealth** check (use the current Hunt score as the DC). If the check fails, the crebain spot the Look-out and report back to the Dragon – from hereafter the Dragon knows the Company's mission (see **The Veil**, above).

Rumbles in the Earth: The ground trembles and groans as the Dragon stirs. All members of the Company must make a Corruption check (**DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw); those who fail gain a point of Shadow, and quail in the face of such a primordial monster.

Servants of the Dragon (From Part Four onwards): A band of Orcs – three Orc Soldiers per hero, led by an Orc Chieftain (see pages 102-3 of the *Loremaster's Guide*) – ambushes the Company. The Orcs fight under the banner of the Dragon – they are from one of the war-bands that serve the monster, anticipating looting and carnage when the Dragon finally rises from its bed in the Watchtower and goes south to Dale. For martially-focused companies, count the troupe as **Bloodthirsty** (*Loremaster's Guide,* page 119).

The Burning Land (From Part Four onwards): The Dragon's growing fires have set the countryside alight, and the Company's path leads through wildfires. During the Journey they may take another route - all Scouts may make **Investigation** checks; if no-one succeeds, the Company loses a day's travel and may try again the next day, or they can brave the flames – each companion makes an **Athletics** check; failure means the character takes 14 (4d6) fire damage.

The Hunting Dragon (From Part Five onwards): The Dragon rises from its bed and goes hunting. If the Dragon is Wruenele, then the Company have little hope of battling the flying Dragon in the open, and must hide from him (**Stealth** checks use the current Hunt score; the Dragon will use his **Fire Breath** against any heroes in the open). If the Dragon is Raenar, then the Company may (foolishly) choose to attack him in the open, in which case battle is joined. The Dragon retreats if reduced to half its starting hit points, covering its retreat with a thick cloud of impenetrable ash.

Preparing for the Journey

In a normal adventure, the Company are often assumed to prepare thoroughly for their journey, and there is no need to play through the purchasing of provisions, assembly of gear, hiring of mounts, and other quotidian elements of an expedition into the Wild. In this adventure, however, the companions are up against a time limit.

If King Dáin agrees to outfit the Company, they can leave immediately and preparing takes no time. Otherwise, they must each make a **DC 16 Wisdom (Survival)** check to secure the necessary equipment quickly and efficiently.

The DC is modified as follows:

-2 if any member of the Company is a resident in good standing in Dale or Erebor.
-1 per 1g spent purchasing gear.
-2 per previous attempt on this check.

Only one attempt may be made per day. If the check fails, the companion has failed to gather what they need, and must wait a day before venturing forth. If they wish to start travelling without all necessary supplies, they may do so at added risk: for the rest of the journey, any checks made as a result of a Journey Event are made at Disadvantage.

Hearing Stories about Dragons

Each member of the Company may make a **DC 10 Intelligence** (**Lore** or **Shadow-lore**) check to recall useful facts about Dragons and how to slay them. Each success gives the Company one of the following bits of lore, which translates to a Preparation die (see below) that the heroes can use in the final battle.

The Company may also choose to wait in Erebor and consult with sages, skalds, lore-masters and old greybeards in inns; each day spent researching gives another piece of valid lore. Many entries list a skill or ability that the hero might employ against the Dragon (see below).

- Some Dragons are hot and breathe fire. Their lesser cousins, the Cold-drakes, are cold and breathe out poisonous vapours. Whether these Cold-drakes are a different breed wrought by the Enemy in the elder days, or if they are Dragons whose fires have gone out, none but the Wise can guess. It's pointless asking Dragons themselves about the matter, for all that a given Dragon cares about is itself, and it always assumes that it is the very model and paragon of the form.

- Dragons have a soft underbelly – it's the only place they're really vulnerable.
- Dragons can confuse their victims with spells and foul vapours. One must be stern of will when facing them. (**Wisdom** helps resist many of their abilities.)
- They delight in riddles, and cannot resist playing the riddle-game if challenged. (**Riddle**)
- And they delight in flattery all the more. The more absurd and obsequious the better – and the more powerful and egotistical the Dragon, the better. (**Traditions**)
- They were made by the Enemy to serve in his terrible wars. They are creatures of utter malice; cruelty and greed vie for dominance in their hearts. (**Insight**)
- Their senses are very keen, but they can be confused by unfamiliar smells. If you bring something they have not smelled before, like a rare perfume (or a Hobbit) it baffles them. (**Stealth**)
- Like snakes, they eat heavily when they feast, and take some time to sleep off a big meal. In such moods, they can be drowsy and vulnerable – or even lulled into a deeper sleep through song. (**Performance**)

– Part Three –
The Shadow of his Wings

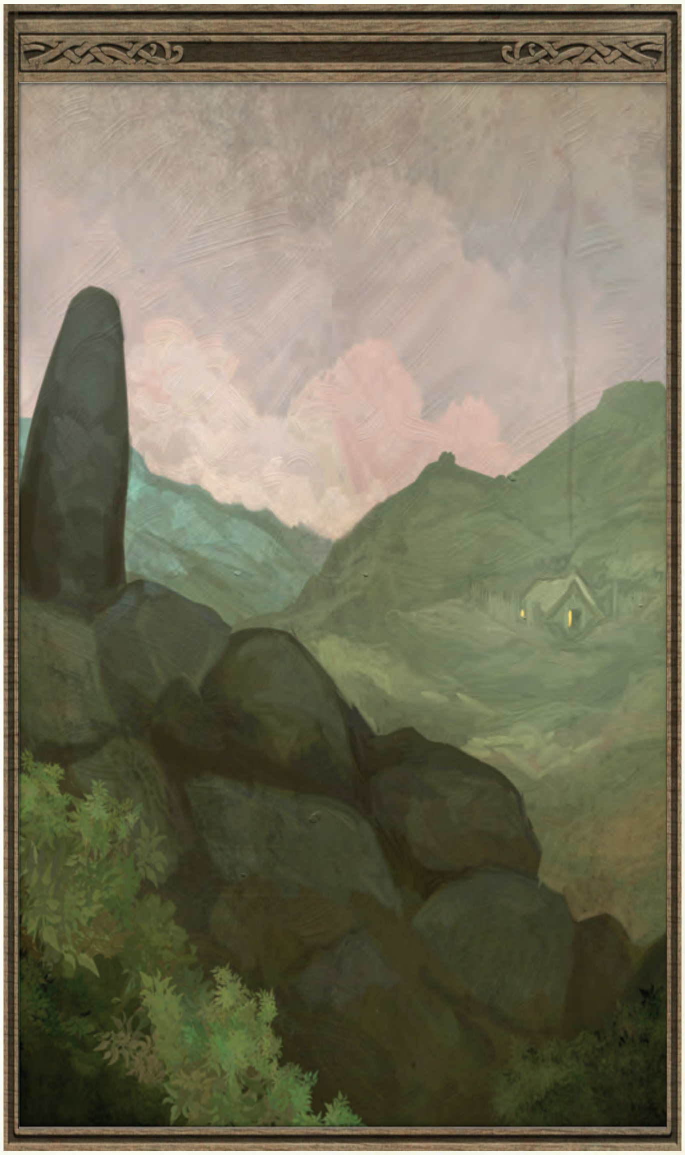
If the companions wish to make straight for Zirakinbar then they must plot their route and make an Embarkation roll as normal. However, heroes familiar with the area (any Dwarves, Bardings, or Men of Lake-town) know that the North has been resettled and can plot a route that takes them to the farmhouse of Ginar before having to stumble into the Wild.

Preparation Dice

First introduced in *Wilderland Adventures* (see page 118), Preparation dice represent special advantages that heroes can gain in a complex battle. Each Preparation die is a d6 and during the battle any Player-hero can take and roll a Preparation die and add the result to any one attack roll, damage roll, saving throw, ability check, or add the result to their AC as a reaction to an attack. Each Preparation die can only be used once.

The Last Homely House

The Company's first lodging after leaving Erebor, if they want to sleep in a bed and not outdoors, is at the house of Ginar, a Dwarf farmer. He and his wife, Kona, were wandering smiths until the Mountain was reclaimed and they could come home. They found, however, that they had lost their taste for living underground, and preferred wind and sun to the caves and tunnels below. Ginar's house sits in a most unusual valley where the Northern Dalelands, the Upper Marches, and the Wastes all converge.

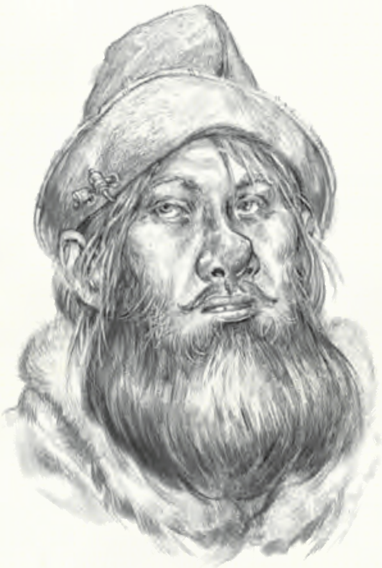


Meeting Ginar

Ginar welcomes travellers, as long as they are polite — a **DC 10 Intelligence (Traditions)** check, so there is no need for a full audience.

- He has no supplies to share beyond a little food. If the Company are in need of stores or advice, he recommends the House of Brech, another two days' travel north. He warns that Skarf, the Lord of Brech, is not the most welcoming of hosts, but he knows the Wastes. It is better to take the longer route via Brech rather than head straight for the watchtower.

- He asks no questions about the Company's purpose, but if they give away the mission, increase the Dragon's Hunt score by 1 — Ginar cannot resist gossiping.



The Other Guests

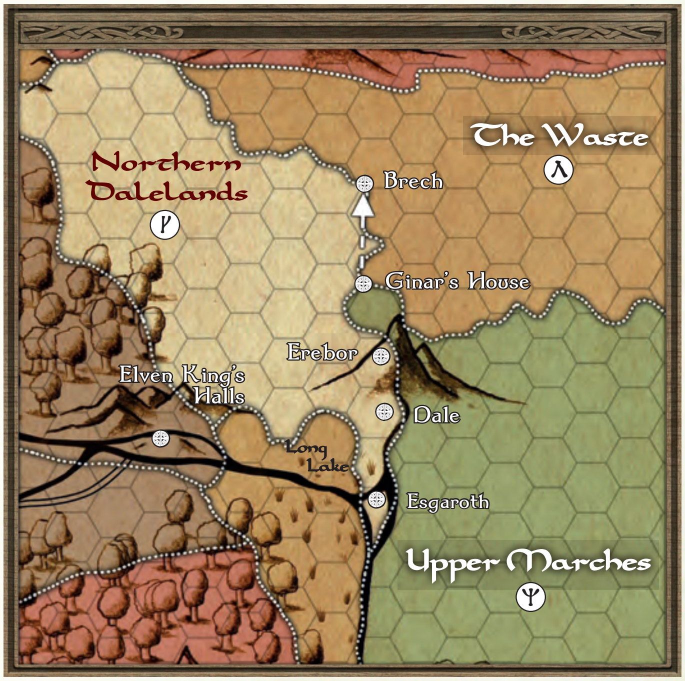
The Company are not the only guests at the farmstead this night; Greystroke and Skirfira are also resting here. Greystroke sits in the corner, running her fingers over the runes on the haft of her long spear and drinking heavily, while Skirfira talks nervously with Ginar and Kona. The older Dwarves do not approve of a young Dwarf-maid running about adventuring, and Skirfira knows better than to admit why she and Greystroke are travelling north.

Greystroke, when she sees the Company, is less willing to be circumspect. *"So, Dáin is not a gambler like his cousin must have been. He doesn't wager the safety of his kingdom on one band of rag-tag adventurers – he sends a whole army of vagabonds, in the hope that one will survive."* She taps her chest lightly with the head of the spear. *"The Dragon is mine. My foe. My kill. Mine."* With that, she stumbles to bed, dragging the spear with her. Anyone who disturbs her slumber gets a spear in the heart.

Departure

The first part of the journey is a short one, from Ginar's house to the small hamlet of Brech on the edge of the Waste, around 35 miles north of Erebor. After getting a warm goodbye from Skirfira, and a sullen stare from Greystroke, the companions depart Ginar's farm. Skirfira and Greystroke do not intend to visit Brech – ignoring Ginar's advice – they head due north, straight into the Waste.

Setting a reasonable pace and keeping to the easier terrain of the Northern Dalelands, the Company can expect to reach Brech after two days of travel (remember to note the time passing, as the longer the companions spend travelling, the riskier the final battle becomes). If the companions head straight for the hamlet, there is no need for the journey rules yet, but if they head straight into the Waste they must now make an Embarkation roll.



There are no roads in good repair in this part of the world. The majority of trade from Erebor flows west and south and occasionally east, but directly north of the Lonely

Mountain is nought but empty lands in this century. The Bardings that have started to rebuild the Northern Dalelands mainly keep to the west. Sometimes, the Company can follow an old Dwarf-road that once ran to some lost hold in the Grey Mountains, but these soon vanish beneath the grass, lost to the memory of mortal folk.

RUMOUR OF THE LANDS

Call for a **Survival** check from the Company's Hunters. If successful, the hero spots tracks along the way, and can discern the following information:

- There are at least two other groups of travellers ahead of the companions on the road.
- One group consists of many Dwarves, a dozen or so. They march fast, as though eager to get ahead of their competitors. (see The *Brothers Khuldrim* on page 69)
- The second is a lone traveller, mounted on a horse. Despite this advantage, he is pacing himself for a difficult journey. (see *Elstan* on page 70)

BRECH

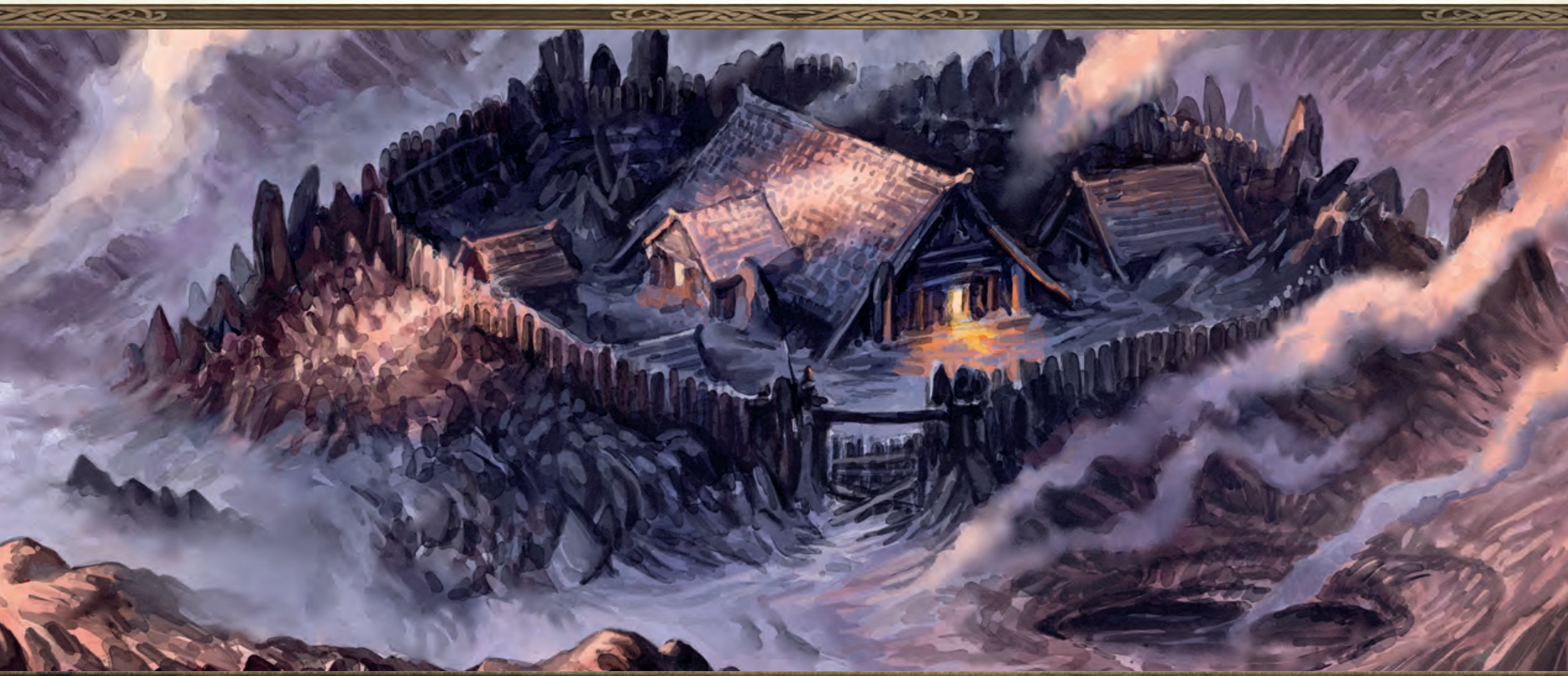
Brech is the home of Skarf Skulson. It is a large house on a hill, well-fortified and surrounded by a stake-topped earthen mound, inhabited by Skarf, his family, and retainers. In his youth, he was a ne'er-do-well and bully in Lake-town, in the service of the old Master. Companions who visited Esgaroth in those days may remember Skarf with little fondness. He came north to look for the lost treasure taken by the Master, and discovered that living on the edge of the world with few other folk around to annoy him suited him just fine. He does know the Waste very well, and may have news of the Dragon or of the best route to the Watchtower – but the Company cannot expect a warm welcome.

It is twilight as the Company approaches Brech's low hill. The wind blows from the east, out of the night, and carries with it the sulphurous stink of the Wastes. Lights burn in the hall, though, and it seems, hard as it is to believe, that a party is in full swing in this lonely hall!

Villainy Upon Villainy

Some years ago, Skarf Skulson made the error of trespassing too close to the Watchtower, and the Dragon sensed him. The wyrm's voice spoke to him out of a deep fissure in the ground, rumbling like an earthquake, and warned him that if he did not flee, he would be burnt to a cinder on the spot. Skarf, though a scoundrel and a thief, was never accounted a coward – but he had never met a *Dragon* before, and the threat of burning *terrified* him to his core. Since then, he has been a creature of the Dragon.

When dealing with Men or even Dwarves, he is as callous and cruel as ever, but now he lives in constant terror of the Dragon's wrath.



Lord Elstan was the first to reach Brech – the old knight wanted to sleep in a bed one more time before crossing the Waste, and he assumed that any loyal subject of King Bard or King Dáin would offer him shelter. Skarf grudgingly let the knight stay, but when Elstan (forgetting the Dwarf-king's warning) spoke of his great quest to slay the wyrm, Skarf was terrified.

Then the Brothers Khuldrim arrived. The Dwarves are doughty warriors, and were lured by the thought of the hoard, but had their own doubts about fighting an actual Dragon. In conversation with Skarf, they learned that the hoard of the Watchtower, while impressive, is the tiniest fraction of the golden bed of Smaug the Unassessably Wealthy, and victory in this quest will not bring them the fortunes for which they hope. The two groups of villains – Skarf and the Dwarves – decided that it would be best for all concerned if the quest failed, and if the troublesome knight never made it to the mountain. Lord Elstan was already snoring in the corner, so dispatching him was easy. Skarf ensured the knight would not anger the Dragon, and the Dwarves looted Lord Elstan's gear.

And as they celebrate their foul deed, the companions come knocking on the doors.

Avoiding Brech

Should the Company choose to avoid Brech, then the weather worsens as they make camp for the night. This region of Middle-earth rarely sees heavy downpours, but tonight the clouds burst across the Waste. The Scout may make a Survival check to find shelter; otherwise, the companions must either ask Skarf for hospitality, or else have a sleepless night on the edge of the Waste, and begin the second phase of their journey without rest. (Each hero gains a level of Exhaustion and must pass a Corruption check (DC 15 Wisdom saving throw) or gain 1 Shadow point).

Optionally, the Company might encounter some of the Brothers Khuldrim carrying the bound and unconscious Lord Elstan out into the Waste – see *Lord Elstan's Grave, page 83.*

SINISTER WELCOMES

"Ho there," calls a voice, *"are ye Men or Dwarves or Orcs?"*

Assuming the companions aren't actively hostile, the look-out – one of the sons of Skarf – tells them that they may enter the ring of Brech, but they must leave their weapons outside the hall in his care. A **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Intelligence (Traditions)** sways the young man, and he grudgingly allows them to keep their arms.

Inside, the hall is lit by a roaring fire. A suckling pig turns on a spit above the flames. There's a strong smell of drink. As the companions enter, a dozen faces turn to watch them, and more than half those faces are hidden behind bushy Dwarf beards and wide bright grins. Seated in the place of honour at the head of the hall is an older Dwarf who seems less merry than the rest, and by his side is a small man, grey-haired, with a pock-marked face and a cloak of fur. The Company guesses that this is Skarf, the master of Brech. He leaps from his chair and comes down to greet them.

AN AUDIENCE WITH SKARF

The players may assume that the purpose of this audience is to convince Skarf to let them stay in his hall. It's not – it's to convince Skarf that he shouldn't allow the Dwarves to ambush them like Lord Elstan. If the Company convince Skarf that they're not going after the Dragon, or if they go all the way and manage to convince him that they can actually slay the Dragon and free him from its thrall, then he will protect them from the Dwarves' treachery. However, if he believes they're going to merely anger the Dragon and draw it down upon him, then he'll help the Dwarves murder the companions in the night.

Expectations

Skarf's reaction to the presence of the companions will almost certainly be negative, unless they can prove to him that they are Dragon-slayers

- **-1** if any of the companions knew him in Lake-town.
- **-1** if there is an Elf in the Company.
- **-2** to **+1**, depending on how convincing the Company is at claiming that the Dragon is as good as dead now that they've taken up the quest.

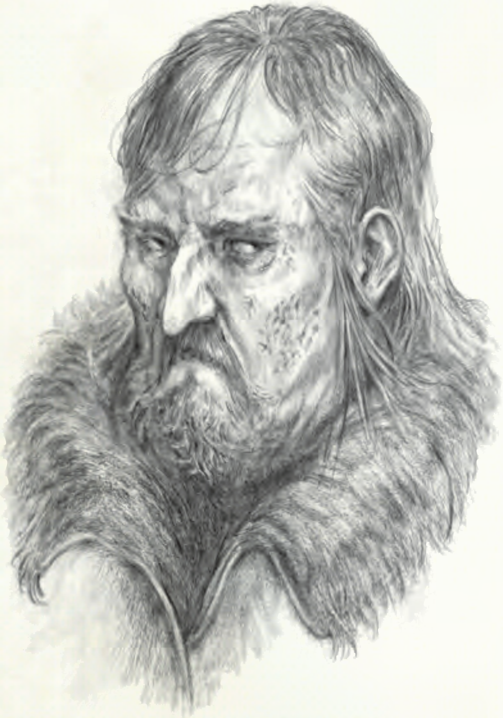
- **+2** if they ask Skarf for advice in crossing the Waste – his knowledge of the local area is his only point of pride these days.

Interaction

The skill used for the Final Audience check depends on how the companions present themselves:

- If the Company openly state they're going to slay the Dragon, they must do so with **Intimidation** and must roll with Disadvantage due to Skarf's overwhelming fear of the Dragon.

- If they attempt to hide their intentions, they must use **Riddle**. Prompted by the Dwarves, Skarf asks the Company several prying questions about their purpose – a **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** check suggests that he suspects they're going after the Dragon.



- If the Company ask for shelter and lodging with **Traditions**, then Skarf says he will consider letting them stay, but as they can plainly see, he is hosting a company of Dwarven heroes, the Brothers Khuldrim, and finding a spare bed may be difficult!

- If any of the Company mention the customs of hospitality, or suggest that as a good Man of Dale, Skarf is honour-bound to give them shelter on such a horrible night, call for a **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** check again. If successful, the character notices that this line of conversation is exceedingly uncomfortable for Skarf.

Final Audience Check

Once the Company have made their gambit, have the speaker make a Final Audience check.

Failure. Skarf decides that he's willing to let them die. He offers them food and drink for the evening, a bed for the night, and to speed them on their way before the dawn. See *Attack By Night,* below, for what happens instead.

Success by 0-1. Skarf declares that his house is full, and he can't take in every vagabond who shows up on his doorstep. The Brothers Khuldrim were there first, so the companions should go! A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** check suggests that Skarf is deliberately trying to drive the companions away. Immediately, one of the Dwarves jumps up and says that the Brothers will make room, that they don't mind getting cozy with such heroes as these Dragon-slayers must be! If the Company press to stay, Skarf shrugs and pretends to be persuaded by the Dwarves (in which case, run *Attack by Night* when the time comes). If they leave, he sends a warning to the Dragon about the danger – see *Slipping Out,* below.

Success by 2-3. Skarf is torn. He knows that the safest thing to do is to kill the Player-heroes, but he can't quite bring himself to do it – they've woken some nobler impulse in him. He allows them to stay, but gets drunker and drunker as the night goes on. He'll even point them to some of the clues in *Something Amiss,* below. For example, he might ask them if they want to buy a horse, or start singing a song about Lord Elstan's exploits.

Success by 4-5. Skarf realises that he has made a terrible mistake in serving the Dragon, and compounded it by allying with the Dwarves. He allows the Company to stay, but during the evening, he takes the highest-Wisdom companion aside and confides in them, admitting that he conspired with the Dwarves to murder Lord Elstan. Now, he and his family are at risk – will the companions save Brech from his villainous guests?

Success by 6+. Skarf is driven mad with guilt! The brave or wise words of the Company have shown him the error of his ways, and only blood can wash away blood! If he acts now, Elstan might yet be saved. He leaps up, shouting that the Dwarves are murderers, and dashes Khuldri's skull open on the hearth! The Dwarves immediately stab Skarf to death, but his sacrifice gives the companions time to grab their weapons.

Something Amiss

In between feasting and talking with the Dwarves, the companions may notice the following clues that something is amiss with a successful check (or better yet, an appropriate trait invocation; traits are perfect for picking up on subtle clues without rolling. *You're Suspicious by nature, so you're the first to notice that something isn't quite right...)*. The Loremaster doesn't need to include all of these clues – give each companion one opportunity to realise the danger.

- **Perception:** There's plenty of ale, but the Brothers Khuldrim aren't drinking heavily. They're making a big show of being drunk, but they're just sipping their drinks as if biding their time.
- **Investigation:** You spot one of the serving-girls scrubbing away at a reddish stain on the floorboards. It looks like spilled blood.
- **Survival:** There are more travelling packs stacked by the wall than there are Dwarves in the hall. Where are the rest?
- **Lore:** One of the Dwarves is eating from a fine silver plate that bears the arms of Dale. Where did he get such a treasure? You recall such items being given as gifts by King Bard to his trusted knights.
- **Performance:** Two of the Dwarves are humming a song as they wash their weary feet. It's the Lay of Elstan, a popular song in Dale describing the heroic deeds of Lord Elstan. They grin cruelly when the song ends.
- **Animal Handling**: There's a horse in the stables at the back of the Ring of Brech. Unlike the other animals there, this is clearly a fine war-horse fit for a tall knight.
- **Insight:** Skarf's daughters and servants seem nervous and fearful around the Dwarves.

Slipping Out

If the Company leave before the Dwarves can waylay them, then Skarf reports the news to the Dragon. Raise Dragon Awareness by 2, or by 4 if the Company openly admitted their intent to slay the monster.

Attack By Night

If the companions do not become suspicious, and actually sleep in the hall, then the Dwarves attack them at night. One companion, chosen at random, may make an **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check to wake up in time; if the hero succeeds by 5 or more, they may alert one other companion; or, if they roll a natural 20, two others. In addition, anyone with a suitable trait (like Wary or Quick of Hearing) may invoke it to make a **Perception** check as well. Companions who wake in time may fight normally – although they're not wearing their armour, and their main weapons are likely stored outside the hall. Sleeping companions are Unconscious until attacked or a creature takes an action to wake the hero.

The Battle of Brech

There are two Dwarves per companion. Skarf's kin may take part in the battle, but are easily defeated. If they fight against the heroes they apply Disadvantage to the hero's attack rolls for the first two rounds of combat, if they fight for the Company then they earn Advantage for each hero's attack rolls for the first two rounds. Skarf himself will join the combat if he's still alive, siding with his family.

Possible Complications in the Battle

The following events can be employed to enliven the fight.

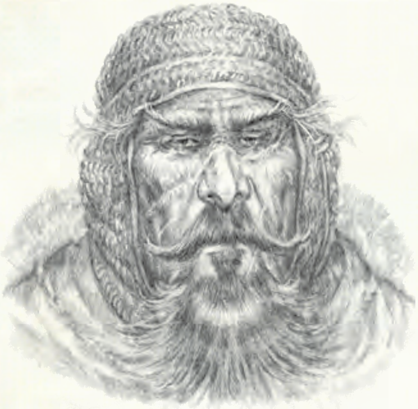
- **The Burning Hall:** The Dwarves set the roof of the hall on fire. For the rest of the battle, the first time a combatant rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll, it takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage from the collapsing structure. The next time it's 2d6 fire damage, then 3d6 bludgeoning damage and so on. Only a fool fights in a burning house.
- **The Laughter of Dragons:** The storm breaks over Brech. Thunder and lightning crash overhead. If a companion rolls a natural 20, the skies flash as if in

answer, and the enemies have Disadvantage on their attack rolls for the remainder of the round.

- **Out of the Frying Pan:** One of Skarf's daughters throws a pan full of sizzling bacon fat into the face of a foe (either a companion or a Dwarf). The victim of this attack is Blinded and takes 1 point of fire damage at the start of each of their turns until they spend their action wiping the fat away.

Dwarven Assassin

Swiftly do the hearts of the Dwarves turn dark and cold.



DWARVEN ASSASSIN

Medium Dwarf

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)

Armour Class 12 (or 16 if allowed to don their hauberks)
Hit Points 66 (7d8 + 35)
Speed 25 ft

Skills Riddle +2, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 10, night vision
Languages Khuzdûl, Westron
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Khazâd ai-mênu! If the Assassin's attack misses, they may use their bonus action to make another attack against the same target.

Pack Tactics. The Assassin has Advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the Assassin's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and that ally isn't Incapacitated.is within 5 feet of the creature and that ally isn't Incapacitated.

Actions

Axe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

The Brothers Khuldrim

The Brothers Khuldri and Skuldri were renowned heroes of Erebor, but Skuldri died and Khuldri fell in with a bad crowd of brigands. He is still of high standing in Erebor, but his travelling companions are the worst sort of Dwarves, more interested in treasure than great deeds – and they are willing to stoop to murder when it suits them.

AFTER THE BATTLE

If Skarf lives, he may be convinced to tell the companions what really happened at Brech, and begs the Company to go after Lord Elstan. Even if killed, he might confess the knight's murder with his dying breath.

Should the companions defeat the Brothers Khuldrim, they may obtain fresh supplies and guidance at Brech for the second part of their journey; this aid provides Advantage on any checks made for their first Journey Event.

The Lost Knight

Searching the Dwarves' belongings – or questioning survivors after the battle – confirms that the Dwarves

SKARF, LORD OF BRECH

Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Armour Class 13 (Hide)
Hit Points 44 (8d8+ 8)
Speed 30 ft

Skills Deception +4, Insight +2, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Westron
Challenge 2 (450 XP))

Broken Blades (1/day). Skarf may invoke this ability as a bonus action. He automatically scores a critical hit with all attacks this round. Afterwards, his weapon is destroyed..

Actions

Multiattack. Skarf makes two attacks with his Great Axe.

Great Axe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

attacked Lord Elstan. Notably, one of the Dwarves has the Aegis of Dale hidden in a sack.

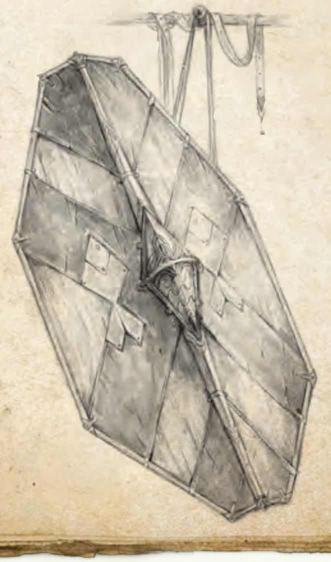
After knocking Elstan unconscious, three of the Dwarves went out into the Waste to find a place to hide the body. They may be encountered in *Lord Elstan's Grave*, page 83.

Following the trail of the Dwarves requires a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** check and brings the Company *Across the New Desolation*.

The Aegis of Dale

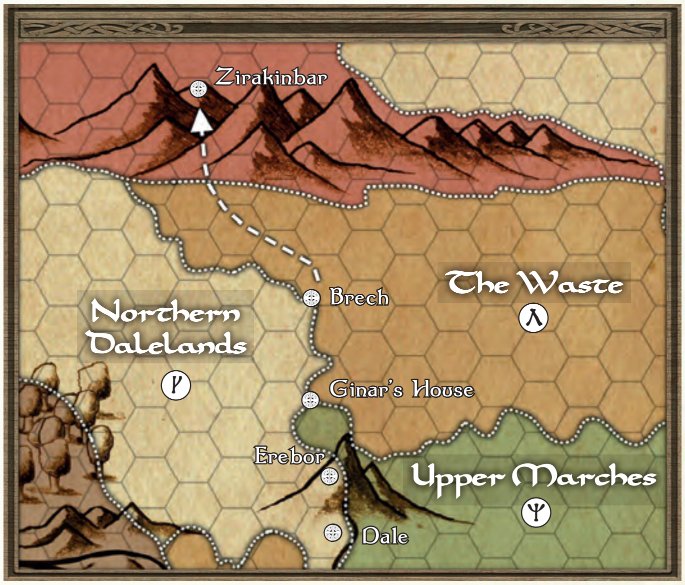
The Dwarves of Erebor made this shield for an ancient Lord of Dale in the first days of that realm. Chased in mithril and enchanted with potent runes, the companions of Thorin Oakenshield recovered the shield from the hoard of Smaug, and gifted it back to King Bard. It is part of the crown jewels of Dale, but King Bard allows one of his champions to carry it.

Type: Great Shield
Craftsmanship: Dwarven
Banes: N/A
Qualities:
1 – Reinforced: Add +1 to AC bonus..
2 – Runes of Resilience: The wielder gains Advantage on death saving throws.
3 – Runes of Fortitude: A custom enchantment, these runes allow the wielder to use a bonus action to gain 10 temporary hit points.



– Part Four –
Across the New Desolation

Between the northern edge of the lands of Men, and the mountains of the Dragons, lies the Waste. A trackless, uninhabitable, bitter region of broken stone and dust. Crossing the Waste takes at least a week, at a Peril Rating of 4 with 1d2 + 1 Journey Events. If the companions have not yet made an Embarkation Roll, they must do so now. The following Events, Meetings, and Perils can be used in place of normal Journey Events (alternating between them). However, they may delay the Company further, making the final battle with the Dragon even more dangerous. It is not required to run all of the following entries.



Events

The following paragraphs describe potential Journey Events for the trip through the Wastes. All the episodes described use special rules, and thus are not formatted in the usual way for Journey Events. Certain events focus on extraordinary challenges, which have a fixed DC outside of the usual range.

Maggots (Hunter)

Somehow, the Company's food supplies become infested with huge slimy maggots that are native to this part of the world. Very little is salvageable – and worse, there is little game to be caught in the Waste. The heroes must choose one of the following two options:

- Press on towards the watchtower. All Hunters must make a **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival)** check. If no-one succeeds, each companion gains a level of Exhaustion.
- Turn south, where there is better prospect of finding food. This costs the Company 1d4 + 1 days, but the **Survival** check is only DC 13.

No Way Forward (Scout)

It should be easy to find a way to the Watchtower – all the companions need to do is keep walking towards the burning mountain on the horizon. However, as Frodo and Sam discovered in the Emyn Muil, just knowing where you're going doesn't mean you can see a route to get there. The Company encounter a broken landscape of jagged rocks, blind canyons, and sudden steep cliffs. They cannot move forward until their Scouts succeed at an **Investigation** check. Each attempt costs a day.

Raging River (Guide)

The Guide's route goes along the bank of a dry valley – or what's usually a dry valley. The storms of recent days have turned the gulch into a torrent of icy black water, mixed with silt and ash. The Guide may choose to turn back and find another route (in which case this counts as **No Way Forward**) or risk pressing on by making a **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival)** check. If the check fails, one of the companions falls into the river when the bank collapses and is swept away. The Company must search for their missing friend – see *Lost in the Wastes*, page 85.

Walking Stones (Look-Out)

Those stones... were they always there? At twilight, it seems to the Look-out that piles of stones are creeping closer and closer to the Company. Every time they look, the rocks appear nearer and nearer. The hero may rouse the Company and get them to move camp (everyone gains a level of Exhaustion), or ignore the impossible walking stones (in which case the Loremaster should roll a d6: on 4-6, one of the companions finds themselves buried by the stones. If they are dug out of this sudden cairn, they gain 2 Shadow points and a level of Exhaustion.

Dreams of Fire (Any Companion)

The character is troubled by dreams of being burnt to death by Dragon-fire. On waking, the character must make a Corruption check (a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw). If the saving throw fails, the character gains 1 Shadow point immediately, and another Shadow point whenever they are attacked by a Dragon's breath weapon or sees another companion perish in flames.

Scorpion in the Bed (Any Companion)

One of the venomous creatures of the Waste crawls into the character's sleeping roll. The character is allowed a **Perception** check to detect the danger; otherwise, the companion is Poisoned until they take a long rest.

Ash Cloud (All)

A choking storm of ash and dust blows down without warning from the north, reducing visibility to next to nothing. All the Companions need to make a **DC 10 Intelligence** saving throw or be separated. All those who succeed stay together; those who fail wander off and find themselves in a labyrinth of echoing canyons. See *Lost in the Wastes*, page 85.

Seen By Orcs

Orc scouts spot the Company at a distance. Raise the Dragon Awareness by 1d6.

Choking Thirst (All)

The unseasonable heat and unutterable dryness of the dust means the companions go through their water supplies faster than they should. Each member of the Company must choose:

- Ration their water and go slower, adding another three days and another Journey Event to their trek.
- Search for drinkable water on the way – this requires a **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** check from the Company's Scout. If successful, the Scout finds water. Otherwise, the Company gains a level of Exhaustion.

MEETINGS

The following scenes don't pose an immediate threat to the Company, although few things in the Waste can truly said to be friendly.

Birds in an Empty Sky

The presence of the Dragon has begun a new desolation on the Waste. As the wyrm's fires grow hotter, they burn the living land, until nothing good can live there – not that much good lived here before the Dragon, anyway. Now, though, even the few animals who lived in or passed through the Wastes are fleeing. The Company spot a flight of birds circling down to the east. Anyone proficient at **Nature** or **Survival** guesses they're in search of drinkable water. Following the birds costs a day's travel time, but brings the Company to a small pool of fresh water.

- A Hunter can easily — a **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival)** check — trap a few birds here to eat, and the water is good to drink.

- If the Company can communicate with birds (*Raven of the Mountain, The Speakers,* a blessing from Beorn, or some other gift), then the birds can give the same advice as Witherfinger, below.

Witherfinger

A dead – well, mostly dead – tree, withered and bare stands rooted in the dusty banks of a dry river valley. It's the only tree for miles around, not that it's much of a tree. Hunched and thin, leafless and twisted, gnawed by worms, but still it cheers the spirit. Whatever else, it has endured in the midst of the desolation.

Companions who have played through The **Watch on the Heath** in *Wilderland Adventures* recognise the 'tree' as the mysterious Witherfinger. For those encountering her for the first time, Witherfinger is... perhaps a tree that has grown wakeful, or a woman grown tree-like, or something else entirely. A few years ago, she remembered how to speak in the manner of two-legged things, but her wanderings in the wastes have sapped her spirit, and now she can communicate only in dreams.

Should a character take an axe to Witherfinger's hoary hide, she hurls a cloud of dust and small stones at the Company, Blinding them all for a moment. When their vision clears, she is gone.

However, should a character rest amid Witherfinger's roots, they find a comfortable bed of moss there to lie upon. Resting there restores 2d8 + 4 hit points, or recovers a level of Exhaustion (companion's choice). In addition, Witherfinger whispers in the companion's dreams. In the dream, the companion hears the crotchety voice of a nervous, somewhat rambling, but kindly old woman. She might say:

- *"Oh and oh. Dark-hearted Dwarves they are, murderous and greedy. They kidnapped that poor old man and threw him down a hole, and stole all his shiny armour. Not fair, not fair at all. Will no-one help him?"* The companion sees Lord Elstan (see page 83) in the pit where the Dwarves threw him. Taking a detour to aid Lord Elstan costs a day.

- *"Orcs! I hate Orcs! Nasty mean axe-y brutes. Never good for no-one. I watched 'em throw the big one out, drove him away with fire, but he's worse than any of them. He wanted to go south, you know. South, to the dark land. To His land. Mordor."* The companion glimpses Ukghash (page see The *Burnt Orc* below) making his way across the ravines.
- *"Them traitors! Never ought good came out of a cold Dwarf's heart! Lying in wait, they are, with murder in mind! Beware 'em!"* The companion has a vision of the *Dwarf Ambush* (page 85), if that is still a possibility. This warning gives the heroes Advantage on the **Dexterity** check for initiative.
- If any of the companions fall victim to *The Haunted Lake* (page 85), then Witherfinger can help the other heroes deal with the spirit. *"They're down there, in the waters. Swim down and fetch 'em up before they're stuck down there forever. Here, I'll aid thee."* Her assistance gives the heroes Advantage on any ability checks made in the lake.

Lord Elstan's Grave

After the Brothers Khuldrim stabbed Lord Elstan in his sleep at Brech, in the House of Skarf, two of them carried him out into the Waste, planning to dump his body in a convenient ditch and return to their beds. However, Elstan managed to wrest himself free of their clutches and ran off into the night. The two Dwarves pursued, and after many misadventures in the Waste they eventually caught up with the old knight, stabbed him again for good measure, and then threw him in a hole. The two villainous Dwarves are still wandering the Waste (and may be encountered in *Dwarf Ambush*, page 85).

Lord Elstan, twice-stabbed and his ankle twisted, now lies at the bottom of a steep-sided sinkhole. The Company may find him by following his trail with **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** check, or be guided here by a dream or portent – or maybe they just hear his weak calls for help.

Rescuing the knight requires a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** check to climb down; failure means the companion takes 3 (1d6) slashing damage from scrapes and cuts. "*Bless you, youngsters. Those wretched Dwarves attacked me as I slept, and stole my sword and shield. Witless, I wandered in the Waste, until they came at me again and imprisoned me here. They are in league with the Dragon, I guess, and mean to stop any of us from reaching the Watchtower. I do not know if I can make it – go on without me!"*

Any healing attempt fixes Elstan's ankle, but his two knife-wounds are infected and likely mortal. Lord Elstan knows this, but makes light of it. *"Oh, I have had worse. Why, at the Battle of Five Armies, this big Cave-Troll caught me by the legs and lifted me up to gnaw on me like a dog with a beef-bone! I had my dagger to hand, though, and knew what to do! One cut across the nose, to startle him, and then I drove the blade elbow-deep into his eye socket! Better'n than sunlight for killing a troll you know! But aye, I think this is my last quest for King Bard. I'll go home and rest. What was it the funny little man said – live happily to the end of my days. However long they may be."*

If the companions restore 20 or more hit points, or use a feature or virtue like Staunching Song or the like, Lord Elstan's wounds are cured.

If the Company ask Elstan to accompany them, the old man slows them down and is too weak to fight. They travel at only half their normal speed. However, his company cheers them and he is full of wisdom and good advice – each member of the Company may recover a level of Exhaustion and makes ability checks with Advantage, thanks to Lord Elstan's tutelage.

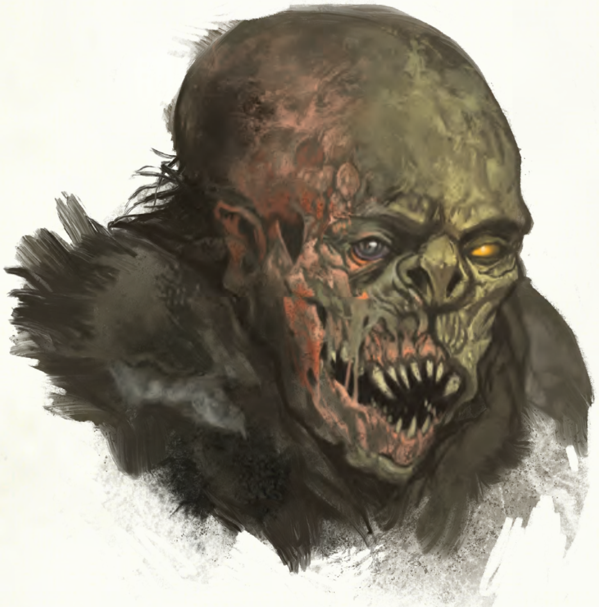
If they escort Elstan to safety at the edge of the Waste, it takes one day there and one day to return. They gain no benefit from doing so, but do not accrue Shadow. If the companions abandon Elstan or let the old man stumble homewards alone, they each gain 2 Shadow points.

The Burnt Orc

A band of Orcs serve the Dragon (see *Battling the Orcs*, page 88). Once, this band followed another chieftain, Ukghash. When Sauron declared in Mordor, in the Year 2951, Ukghash heard the call of the Dark Lord. At the time, the Orcs dwelt in caves in the Grey Mountains, but Ukghash drove and dragged and harried them south and east, always south and east, towards the Dark Tower.

When the Orcs came close to the Watchtower, one of Ukghash's lieutenants, a treacherous Orc named Haglach rebelled against the chieftain and offered the tribe's loyalty to the Dragon. Why sneak past the watchful men of Dale and the Dwarves of the Lonely Mountain, or brave the darkness of the Spider-thronged forest, when they could serve the Dragon and eat roasted flesh every night!

Ukghash quarrelled with Haglach, until the Dragon intervened with a fiery blast. Ukghash fled the Dragon's wrath, and ever since has roamed the Waste, hoping to reclaim his place at the head of the tribe. If he could murder Haglach, or if the Dragon went away south… or if the Dragon died, that would work too… Ukghash, therefore, can be a most unlikely ally for the Company.



The companions spot the lone Orc as they travel across the Wastes. His face and left arm are still scarred with burns, making him unusually ugly, even for an Orc. He stands taller than most of his kind, and there is a dangerous light in his eyes. The Dark Lord calls him, even now; he is not craven, and can endure sunlight better than most.

Ukghash knows the region well – and he knows that a company of armed adventurers travelling towards the Watchtower can only have one purpose. He meets the Company at twilight in a region of broken rocks and narrow ravines, where he can easily vanish if the encounter turns hostile. If the Company move to attack, he turns and flees; he can only be caught with a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival)** check. He speaks the Common tongue.

"I am Ukghash, burnt-Orc. You come to kill the Dragon. I want to see him dead, too. We have common cause, you and I."

Ukghash offers to guide the Company to the Watchtower. He claims he can get them past Haglach's patrols, bringing them down unseen paths to the Dragon's very doorstep. He won't murder them in their sleep, or bring them into a trap. This he swears in the name of the Dark Lord, in the name of Sauron (and anyone with Orc-lore or proficient in **Shadow-lore** knows that the Enemy does *not* permit his true name to be spoken aloud, even by his servants. For an Orc, swearing by that name is no small matter, but it is still an oath founded on treachery and cruelty. In return, he wants them to swear three oaths, in the name of whatever powers they honour.

- First, that they will do Ukghash no harm while they are in the Wastes.
- Second, they will slay the Dragon and Haglach too, but not attack the rest of the Orcs. "*Unless the fools throw themselves on your blades, of course – I'll not gainsay you a kill.*"
- Third, Ukghash gets a fair share of the treasure hoard, to do with as he will.

A **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** check indicates that Ukghash might indeed hate someone more than the companions. Still, willingly travelling with a creature of the Enemy is worth 1 Shadow point for each member of the Company.

Playing Ukghash

You are not a "good Orc". In fact, you're worse than any of the others in the tribe – you are a fanatical servant of Sauron, and hear his dread voice more clearly than your kinfolk.

You know that you are making a dangerous gamble by putting yourself in league with *Tarks* and stunted Dwarves. They will not believe you are their friend, so you must instead show them you are very very *useful*, so they will not attack you.

When Haglach is dead, *then* you kill them. Not before. Not before.

If the companions reject Ukghash, but fail to track him down and slay him, he runs back to the Dragon and curries favour by warning of the Company's approach. Roll a d10 and add the result to the Dragon Awareness total, counting '10' as zero (the irritated Dragon incinerates Ukghash without listening to him). Otherwise, the Dragon forgives Ukghash and takes the Orc back into his service; add Ukghash to the forces ranged against the Company in **Battling the Orcs,** page 88.

Ukghash is a Great Orc (see *Loremaster's Guide,* page 97).

Perils

The following threats might be applied as the Loremaster deems appropriate.

Lost in the Wastes

The Waste is especially perilous this time of year. The Guide must make a **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival)** check to find the right route through the broken lands. The hero has Advantage on this check if the Company received advice from Skarf (page 73) or have guidance from Ukghash.

If the Guide fails, the Company is lost: each Scout must make **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** checks until one of them finds a way forward. Each set of checks costs one day.

On a failure with a natural 1, that companion becomes separated from the rest of the group and gets lost. A lost companion may be found with a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival)**; each set of Survival checks costs a day of travel.

On a natural 20 the Company discovers something useful: drinkable water or a good shelter for one night against the horrors of the Waste. All companions can recover a level of Exhaustion.

Dwarf Ambush

If the companions defeated the Brothers Khuldrim in the House of Brech, then this ambush is barely worthy of the name. The three Dwarves who brought Elstan into the Wastes attempt to waylay the Company, hoping to steal their food and water.

However, if the Company did not face the Brothers Khuldrim at Brech, then this is a much larger ambush. In this case, there are two Dwarves for each companion.

- In either case, the Dwarves hide in tunnels and cracks in the chalky ground of the waste, and wait until the Company pass by before emerging and attacking. Heroes with **passive Perception 14** or higher spot the attackers before they strike and are not Surprised.

- The Dwarves use snares to entangle the Company. Each companion must make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw or become Grappled (Escape DC 13). Surprised heroes have Disadvantage on the saving throw. A hero can spend an action to free a companion from a snare.

The Haunted Lake

The companions come across a brown lake of stagnant and foul water. Deaths-head midges rise from its surface as they approach. All the adventurers feel a sudden compulsion to drink the waters. Each companion can make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw to resist the compulsion. Heroes with an appropriate trait like Wary or Stubborn gain Advantage on the saving throw.

Those who do drink instantly fall into an enchanted slumber and become Paralysed. A character who didn't drink and is proficient with **Shadow-Lore** or has a suitable trait guesses that there is an evil spirit dwelling in the lake that has ensorcelled the Company.

A Scholar can use *Hands of a Healer* to remove the paralysis; a hero can make a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check to carry or drag a Paralysed companion away from the lake. Small heroes have Disadvantage on this check if they're attempting to move a Medium size companion. The victim quickly falls back to sleep unless brought away from the lake. It takes hours to coax or drag a victim away from the lake; each set of rescue attempts by wakeful companions costs a day. Characters freed from the lake's enchantment cannot help rescue others – only those who initially resisted are immune. Others fall back asleep immediately if they come close to the lake.

A companion daring the water receives a vision of a grand feast in the manner of the legends of older days. In the vision, a hooded skeletal figure sits at the head of the feast-table in the bottom of the lake, surrounded by the spirit-forms of the sleepers. This shadow – a Lake-wight, perhaps – serves the sleepers food and drink, but the more they eat, the weaker and more emaciated their dream-selves become.

Swimming to the bottom of the lake requires a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check; failure means the character takes 4 (1d8) necrotic damage and the character's maximum hit points are reduced by the same amount. A hero must finish a long rest to restore their original maximum hit points.

Once at the bottom of the lake, the swimmer can make a **DC 10 Charisma** check to free a companion's spirit from the spell. If the hero fails with a natural 1, the swimmer is caught by the evil spell. The swimmer's body floats back to the surface, while the swimmer's spirit joins the feast below.

If by terrible mischance, the whole Company falls victim to the lake, then perhaps they might be rescued by **Witherfinger** (page 82) or **Ukghash** (page 83).

Once the companions escape the enchantment, they may dredge the mud at the bottom of the lake if they wish. Doing so costs a day, but the Company discovers treasure worth 10g in the form of old coins and jewels amid the many, many bones that lie there. It seems evil men used the lake as a ritual site for sacrifices in past ages.

- Part Five -
Approaching the Watchtower

A band of Orcs under the leadership of Haglach serves the Dragon. The Orcs came from the north-west, from the Grey Mountains, but now dwell in the caves and tunnels along a gorge that runs between the edge of the Waste and the peak of Zirakinbar, the Watchtower. In years past, the gorge caves were frozen and home to Snow-trolls and lesser Cold-worms, but the growing heat of the Dragon has thawed them out. Now, they are mud-choked pits of slime, full of secret hiding places and uncertain footing, making them a perfect lair for Orcs. The gorge is the only easy route through the hills.

While the Company cannot see the Orcs at this distance, by night it's clear that the gorge is inhabited, for at sundown the Orcs light huge bonfires and chant the name of the Dragon, as if stoking his flames. Every day that the Company draws nearer the pass, the chants get louder and the air grows hotter, as though they are walking into a furnace. If he is with the Company, Uzghash grudgingly warns them of the Orc encampment's guards and watchers.

Orc-Sentries

Orc-sentries watch the approaches to the Watchtower from perches on the hillsides and tors that dot the northern wastes. The lands around are still and empty, so any movement can be seen from a long distance away. Fortunately, a maze of gullies and defiles offers cover, so the companions can try to advance without being seeing. Orcs have good night-vision, so there's no advantage to trying the crossing by dark – and by day, sentries in caves high on the hillside take over, staring into the sunlight until their eyes bleed.

Before crossing the maze, the Company's Scout can range ahead and try to find the best route with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check. If the check fails, the Scout risks being spotted and must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** check to hide in time.

A successful **Investigation** check by the Scout gives the companions Advantage on the **Stealth** checks required to cross the maze. The Company must succeed on three **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** group checks. If a group check is failed, the Orcs spot the Company.

Spotted!

If the Company is spotted, there's enough time for one round's worth of attacks against the Orc Guard lookout (page 104 of the *Loremaster's Guide*). If the companions fail to slay the Orc, the alarm is raised. The Company may retreat and try to hide in the Wastes, or press on.

If they press on, then they're going to be *Battling The Orcs* (see below) as Orcs swarm out of holes and tunnels in the valley and close in on the travellers.

If they retreat, it costs a day and increases the Dragon's Hunt score by +4, but they can attempt the crossing again the next day.

If the Company reaches the hills on the edge of the Heath, another choice lies before them. Do they take the shorter route through the Orc-infested gorge, or the longer, harder but possibly safer route through the mountains on either side?

The Mountain Route

At any time, the mountain route would be perilous. The hills that mark the border between the Waste and the Withered Heath are steep and rocky, and every route goes up sheer cliffs or over mounds of loose scree. If the Company were here before, they remember the biting cold winds that howled around the slopes, or the icy rime on the rocks.

Now, though, things are even worse, for the Dragon's heat has brought an unexpected and unwelcome false spring to the region. The cliffs glisten like a poisoned blade in the dying sun, as ice turns to slippery slush and back again, and the hills slough mud in landslides like a snake shedding its skin. Fortunately, once the companions reach the top of the cliffs, they can easily hide in the scrub-forests along the hills and avoid the Orcs – assuming, of course, they do reach the top of the cliffs.

Crossing via the mountain takes three days, plus another two to make it through the hills beyond to the Watchtower. The Company will experience 1d2 Journey Events with a Peril Rating of 5 as they cross the mountains.

Potential Journey Events

The following paragraphs describe potential events for the mountain route (all the episodes described use special rules, and thus are not formatted in the usual way).

Landslide! (Guide)

The ground begins to slip and slide beneath the Company. The Guide must immediately make a **Survival** check at Disadvantage as the land itself shifts underfoot. Failure means the companions are caught in the landslide. Each hero must make a **Dexterity** saving throw, taking 2d8 bludgeoning damage and gaining a level of Exhaustion on a failure or 1d8 bludgeoning damage on a success. Worse, the path is now blocked, costing the Company a day's travel.

The Cliff Path (Scout)

The only way forward is to climb a sheer cliff. The Scout goes first, with a rope. Climbing the cliff requires three **Athletics** checks. Each success awards the Scout 10 feet of vertical progress, but a failure represents a fall at the accumulated height. For example, a failed first check is a fall of 10 feet, a failure on the second is a fall of 20 feet and a failed third check is a 30-foot fall. Once the Scout gains the summit, the remainder of the Company can easily follow the guide-rope up. Alternatively, a day's exploration and a successful **Investigation** check at Disadvantage finds another route hidden amidst the sheer slopes.

Warg-Tracks (Hunter)
The Hunter notices the traces of a Warg, and the prints suggest the beast is searching for the Company. The Hunter may hide the Company's tracks with a **Survival** check; on a failure increase the Dragon's Hunt score by 2.

Orc Scouts (Look-Out)
Orc scouts creep abroad by night, searching the cliffs around the gorge. The Look-out gets an **Perception** check to notice their approach and warn the rest of the Company. Otherwise, the companions are spotted and the scout warn the other Orcs. Increase the Dragon's Hunt score by 2.

Dreams of Fire (Any)
The character is troubled by dreams of being burnt to death by Dragon-fire. On waking, the character must make a Corruption check (**DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw). If the saving throw fails, the character gains 1 Shadow point immediately, and another Shadow point whenever he or she is attacked by a Dragon's breath weapon or sees another companion perish in flames.

The Dragon Is Here! (All)
The Dragon goes hunting, looking for one of the hardy wild goats or maybe a fat Snow-troll to eat. As it circles, though, it smells an unfamiliar scent on the air – adventurers! Raise the Dragon's Hunt score by 2.

9 THE GORGE ROUTE

The gorge route is faster, but requires sneaking past a host of Orcs. There are two ways for the Company to attempt this feat:

By Brightest Day
Creatures of the Enemy cannot abide sunlight – and even this far north, even with clouds of ash or snow choking the sky, the noonday sun is too bright for the Orcs to tolerate, so they must retreat into their caves. The Company could race across the valley at noon, hastening towards the Withered Heath as fast as they can. The downside, of course, is that they will certainly be seen and pursued once the sun goes down, and then the companions will be caught between the Orcs and the Dragon.

If the companions choose this plan, they can cross the valley and be at Zirakinbar in two days – but they will have the Orc-host on their heels! Raise the Dragon's Hunt score by 6, and there's no time to spare for subtlety once they reach the Watchtower – the Company's only hope is to slay the Dragon before the Orcs arrive!

By Darkest Night
Each night, the Orcs celebrate the coming doom of the north as their master's fire grows. The Company can try sneaking through as the Orcs are distracted by the bonfires. This has its virtues – there's a chance that the Company can get through without being seen – and its perils, in that if the companions are spotted, the whole Orc-host will be upon them.

It all comes down to one group **DC 20 Dexterity (Stealth)** check. Succeed, and the Company gets through the gorge undetected. Fail, and they must cut their way through.

BATTLING THE ORCS

Haglach's Orc tribe numbers more than five hundred. Virtually all of them are lesser Misty Mountains Orcs and Goblins, but they are no less dangerous for that. If the Company engage with a patrol, then assume there's one Orc-Soldier and two Goblin Archers per companion, plus an Orc Guard in command. If Haglach is present, he is a Great Orc.

If the Company are unlucky enough to take the whole tribe on, then each wave consists of two Orc-Soldiers and three Archers per companion. A new wave joins the battle every other round.

A Red Day, A Sword Day, To Die on
Optionally, if Lord Elstan is with the Company, he might volunteer to stand rearguard in the gorge against the Orc-host. There are narrow places where one heroic old man, wounded or no, could hold the pass against five hundred for a time.

AMBUSHING THE ORCS

Every few days, Haglach and a few of his advisors travel north to the Watchtower to offer obeisance to the Dragon. If the companions manage to sneak past the Orcs without being spotted, they can ambush Haglach and his Orc Guards (two per companion). Slaying Haglach throws the Orc tribe into confusion (and allows Ukghash to take over again, if he is nearby). Furthermore, the Company could take the Orc-garb and disguise themselves as Orcs, allowing them to sneak up close to the Dragon.

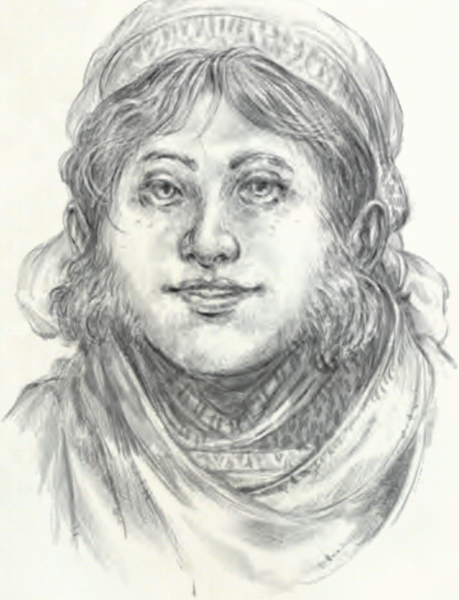
- Part Six -
By Stealth and Guile

Once, the Watchtower of Zirakinbar was a wonder to behold. The hill was a hollow one, riven by many narrow clefts and tunnels, and of them the Dwarves of yore made an instrument, a harp of air and stone that could be played by opening or shutting doors and valves. They made the mountains sing.

The Dragon smashed all that. Nothing remains of the upper levels of the Watchtower now. The Chamber of Winds and Raven's Perch are both nothing but rubble. Smoke and sulphurous fumes rise from the mountain's shattered crown.

9 A Spear's Throw

As the companions approach the mountain, a small dusty shape scurries out from the shadow of a boulder. It takes them a moment to recognise it as Skirfira, the young Dwarven sage they met back in Erebor, the companion of Greystroke. She runs up to meet them and explains breathlessly:



"Greystroke... she wouldn't listen... or wait. Dragon-fire... too hot... she's climbing up!" With that, Skirfira points at the side of the mountain. To the right of the road there is a sheer cliff that leads up to a cave mouth, a crack big enough for a Dragon to crawl out of (it's the mouth of the Rift, location 4 on the map below). Fumes pour from the crack, almost hiding the shape of a lone figure scaling the rocks —Greystroke.

- If the Company don't act, then a few moments later there is a flare of red light from inside the mountain, and then a terrifying roar that nearly dislodges Greystroke. The Dragon emerges from the cave.
- If it's Raenar, then he sees Greystroke and sneers. He starts to climb down the cliff towards her. She snaps at him with her spear, aiming for his eye-socket, but the Dragon twists and she hits his shoulder instead. The Dragon roars in pain so loudly the mountain shakes, and Greystroke loses her grip. Before she can fall, though, the Dragon's head snakes out, bites her, and swallows her whole.
- If it's Wruenele, then the Dragon flies out across the grey skies, heedless of the enemy behind him. He circles around the mountain, exulting in his flight. Once, twice, Greystroke raises her spear to throw it, but it's clear that she doesn't have the leverage to make the throw. On the third pass, she looks down for a moment to the valley far below, as if bidding farewell to Skirfira. Then she throws the spear, putting her full strength behind it, pushing off with her legs to give the throw added force. She falls to her death. The spear flies towards Wruenele, who lets out a blast of flame in alarm. The fires deflect the spear just enough, and it clatters to the ground beyond him.
- Either way, the Dragon retrieves the spear after a few minutes, and returns to its lair.

Saving Greystroke: Saving the hero is no easy task. The only options would be to attack or distract the Dragon as it emerges, or race up the mountainside to stop Greystroke before she gets too close and wakes the Dragon. Invoking a suitable trait (like Swift) is necessary in the latter case.

Recovering the Spear: Grabbing the spear before the Dragon gets to it is a little easier, although the companion must still make a **Stealth** check against the Dragon's passive Perception to avoid being seen by the Dragon. Alternatively, they can steal the spear from the treasure hoard once the Dragon brings it back up to the Watchtower.

Skirfira's Aid: If Greystroke dies, Skirfira is stricken with grief. A **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check convinces her to keep going and to mourn her friend later. Skirfira can give the Company any three pieces of lore from the *Secrets of Mazarbul* (page 70) or *Stories of Dragons* (page 72). Otherwise, she stumbles away south, as though blind.

The Shadow of the Past

If your group played through all of *Wilderland Adventures*, what happened in your game? What was left here? Is the Chain of Thangorodrim somewhere in the wreckage? For that matter, does the foul Gibbet King lie here, poison-blasted or caught by his own sorcery? Did the Dragon Raenar perish on the slopes, or was his skull burst asunder by the Chamber of Winds?

This adventure assumes that the upper part of the Watchtower is destroyed and no sign or device of the Gibbet King remains.

If the heroes rescue Greystroke, then Skirfira devotes herself to tending to her wounded comrade. She offers up the above secrets freely, and advises the Company to make for the secret door into the Watchtower. She offers her axe to open the secret door.

Greystroke's Aid: If Greystroke survives, she grudgingly thanks the Company for their aid and will fight alongside them – her aid counts as four Preparation dice in the battle with the Dragon.

NOT AT HOME

The Dragon's movements in this part of the adventure are determined both directly and indirectly by the actions of the Player-heroes. Depending on how *A Spear's Throw* resolved, the Dragon is either slumbering on his bed of treasure, or returning after having retrieved Greystroke's spear.

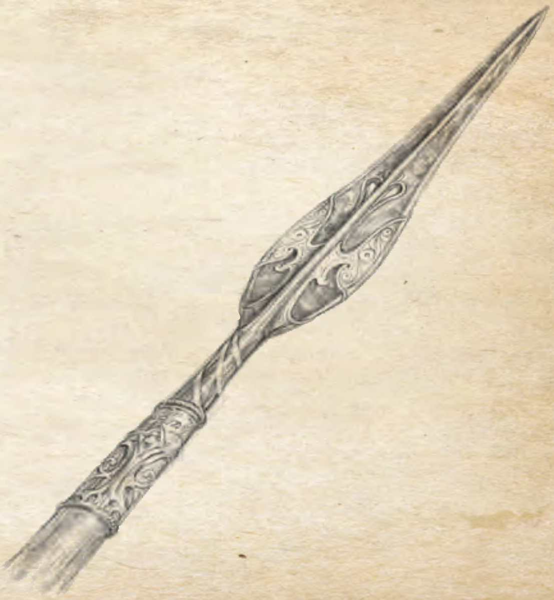
If the Dragon knows the Player-heroes are nearby, he may attack or chase them. The Dragon will not normally walk into a trap or a disadvantageous situation, but the Company may be able to taunt him with an **Intimidation** check (**DC 20**, -2 per Hunt Episode elapsed as the Dragon gets more and more angry).

If the Dragon merely suspects the presence of intruders, then continue to use the Dragon Awareness & Hunt rules.

Nameless, The Elven Spear

Type: Great Spear
Craftsmanship: Elven
Banes: Dragons
Qualities:
1 – Foe-Slaying: When attacking a Dragon, you score a critical hit if your roll is within half your Proficiency Bonus (rounded up) from 20. For example a hero with a Proficiency Bonus of +3 scores a critical hit on a roll of 18, 19 or 20.
2 – Runes of Victory: While bearing this weapon you gain a +1 bonus to all saving throws. When you attack with this weapon, a roll of 1 becomes a critical hit instead of an automatic failure.

See pages 136-7 of the *Loremaster's Guide* for more information on these Enchanted Qualities.



Locations in the Tower

1. The Road: This path winds up the steep sides of the mountain to the main gate of the Watchtower. It's exposed to the sky (the Dragon deliberately tore away any shelter) so anyone travelling along the road can be seen for miles.

2. Main Gate: The main entrance to Zirakinbar. The Dragon is still small enough to squeeze through the gates, although it's now a tight fit.

3. Secret Entrance: The Dragon never found this cunningly concealed secret door. To open it, one must knock three times with an axe-head.

4. Rift: This huge crack in the mountain is the Dragon's back door. If the Dragon is winged Wruenele, then he spreads his great wings to catch the cold winds howling from the north, and takes flight. If the Dragon is crawling Raenar, then he slithers down the sheer wall of the cliff like some hideous bat, digging his claws deep into the stone as he descends.

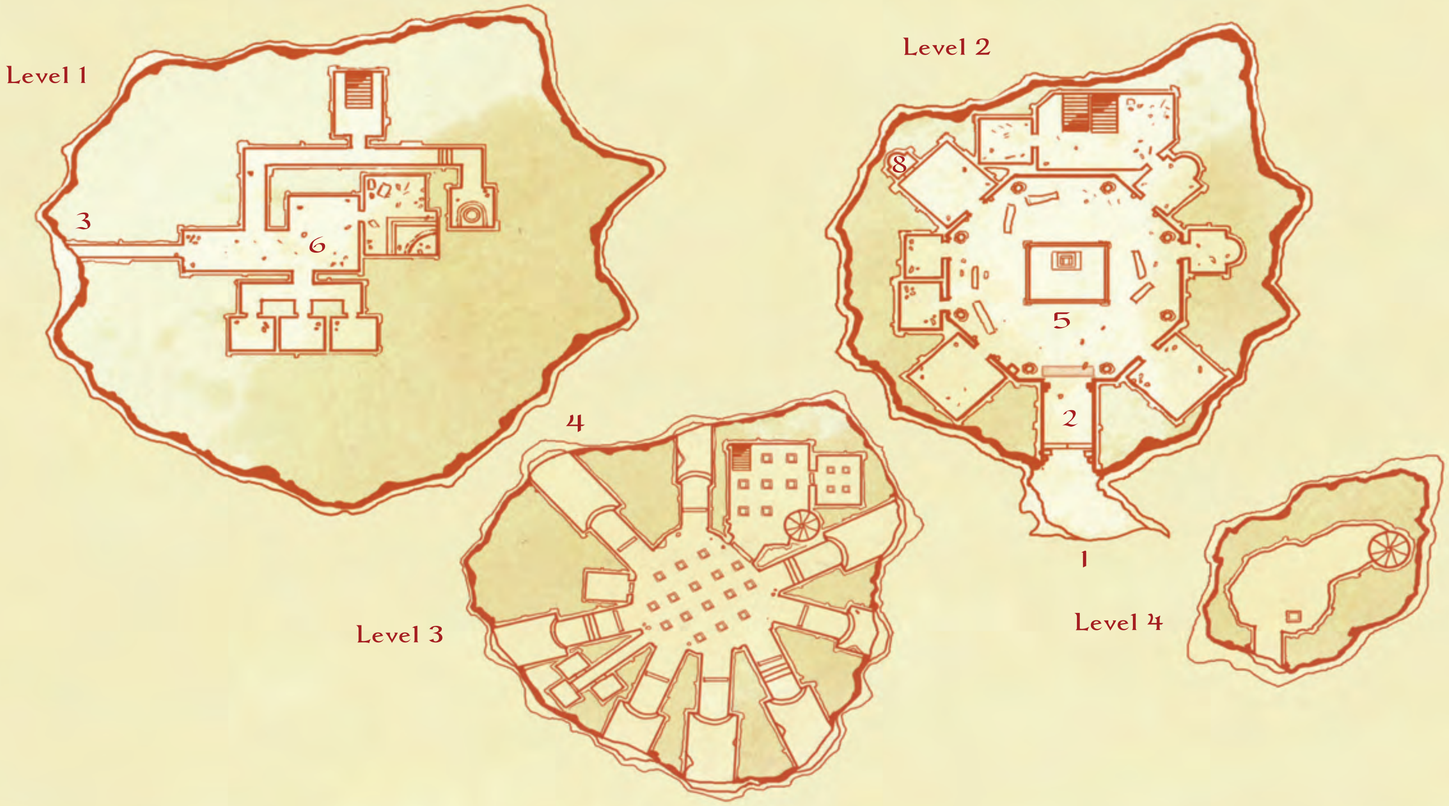
5. Great Hall: This chamber has become the Dragon's lair. The room is unpleasantly hot and foul-smelling, with thick clouds of smoke billowing around looking for an exit. Even so large a creature as the Dragon is hard to see in here. The companions might catch glimpses of the beast, a burning eye there, a clawed foot there, a length of tail or span of wing there, but they won't see the whole Dragon unless they lure it outside.

A huge stone block hangs above the main door, suspended by a chain with a quick-release pulley. In times past, a cunning Dwarven machine controlled the block, but the Orcs replaced this with this simple solution. The Dragon uses this mechanism to prevent intruders from entering his lair when he is out hunting – he closes the door, then leaves through the rift.

6. Cellars: Empty and in danger of collapse.

7. Empty Chambers: Not marked on map.

8. Bed of Treasure: The Dragon long ago sniffed out the treasure kept in the secret vault, and gathered it into a bed. The hoard here is rated at 400*** (if the Company found the secret vault during **The Watch on the Heath**, then the new hoard is a *mere* 200***).



ENTERING THE WATCHTOWER

There are three routes into the tower.

- The main door is easily accessible, but leaves no possibility for stealth. If the companions go in that way, the Dragon knows they're coming.
- Climbing up the cliff wall to the rift is much more dangerous (if that is the right word, when the "safer" path leads literally right into a Dragon's den!) To climb the cliff, each adventurer must succeed on a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check. Failure means the character slips and falls. A kind Loremaster might permit the adventurer to land on some jagged rocks 20 or 30 feet below.
- If the heroes know the secret way in, they can sneak up the road until they come to a goat-path, then circle around the peak to the secret door. The path is narrow and slippery, but can be traversed with care.

Sneaking Around

The difficulty to sneak around outside or in the lower level of the Watchtower is **DC 15**. Moving around the upper level is **DC 17**; it's **DC 19** in the great hall or bed of treasure. Failing a **Stealth** check raises the Dragon's Hunt score by 2; if the Company fails the Stealth check, the Dragon spots the thief. If the companions are in disguise, then they must make a **DC 15 Charisma (Deception)** check to fool the Dragon.

No check is required to boldly approach if they met Raenar in the past and parted on 'good' terms. In such a case he is curious why the Company has foolishly returned to his supper table.

CONVERSATIONS WITH A DRAGON

Conversing with the Dragon is an excellent way to stall for time, in order to get other companions into position to battle the foe.

Motivations & Expectations

Raenar's personality is detailed on page 104 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*. Wruenele's is not much different, other than he has never experienced captivity. His youthful heart desires both fame and fortune instead.

Playing Raenar

- You are old, but your heart was cold and bitter for many of those long centuries. A skulking Cold-worm, gnawing the roots of the mountains and biding your time. Now, with Smaug gone, you are the oldest and greatest of the wyrms of the North, and your spirit is ablaze for the first time since the Elder Days.
- You know, though, that there are stronger forces in the world than you (though none as strong as you shall be, if you survive). An arrow brought down Smaug, and rumour has reached your ears that the Necromancer of Dol Guldur too has been defeated. There are many, many enemies, so you must be cautious and conserve your strength.
- Plunder and treasure is everything to you. Guard your hoard jealously. Count every coin like a miser.
- You do not laugh. You never laugh. You shall laugh only when you have burnt Erebor, and Dale, and the Greenwood, and smashed Lake-Town to splinters, and when every living thing between the Crossings of Celduin and the Fords of Anduin acknowledges you as Master.

Playing Wruenele

- What a time to be a Dragon! You are young and glorious, a bright banner of flame across the skies of a grey world! You are a god, a prince of Dragons! Nothing can stop you!
- For you, play and punishment, laughter and fire are all one. Indulge yourself. Be whimsical and joyful, for nothing can harm you or stop you!
- Take special joy when others point out your magnificence.
- You are no fool, of course. You know that Smaug died when some archer struck him with an arrow, and you must admit that your diamond waistcoat is still somewhat lacking. Speed must be your watchword, then – fly faster than an arrow and hotter than a thunderbolt!

Introduction

The Company's speaker must use **DC 20 Intelligence (Traditions)** to introduce the Company to the Dragon (see page 97 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*). Success or failure is fleeting — he's going to eat you either way, of course. Alternatively, the companions can jump straight into **Riddle**, but starting with it means the Company won't be able to persuade the Dragon of anything during the interaction phase.

The Riddle Game

The safest option is the Riddle-Game. If you want to use mechanics, then start with a **Riddle** check at **DC 10,** then **DC 12**, then **DC 14** and so forth. The Player-heroes start by posing a riddle for the Dragon to solve, and then the Dragon responds with a harder one, and then the players pose a still harder one and so on until one side fails a check. If the Company wins, the Dragon grudgingly offers them a single (small) favour or a bauble worth no more than 1 gold piece. If the Dragon wins, he boasts loudly and then gathers himself for an attack.

Negotiations

If the Company does not challenge the Dragon to the Riddle Game, they have only a few minutes to convince the worm to listen to them. Listed below are some common approaches. The players might choose a different option in which case you'll need to decide how the Dragon reacts.

If the companions try to convince the Dragon to delay attacking Erebor, they must either make a **Persuasion** check or an **Intimidation** check at Disadvantage. They might say something like *"Even Smaug the Dreadful was unable to hold the Mountain, and the strength of Erebor has been added to that of Dale and the Iron Hills. The lives of Dragons are long, oh calamitous one – wait a short few years, and then consider a foray south. Cleverness and caution, alloyed with fire and wrath, will make you greater than Smaug, greater than any Dragon in this Age of the World or the last!"*

- **Failure.** The Dragon attacks the presumptuous visitors immediately.
- **Success.** The Dragon considers their words and promises to wait 'some time' before attacking Erebor. He will only keep this promise if the heroes succeeded by 5 or more. (Of course, if the Company thinks that this is a solution, they are sorely mistaken. Not only will the Dragon attack in years to come with added strength, but he may do so bolstered by the malign will and desire of the Enemy.)

If the Company tries to put the Dragon to sleep with a meal and music, then a companion must make a **Performance** check. If the meal was substantial (more than two Medium-sized creatures or even just one Elf or Dwarf) then the hero has Advantage on this check.

- **Failure.** The tune is discordant with the Dragon's mood and it attacks immediately (the heroes are Surprised).
- **Success by 0-2**. The Dragon will have Disadvantage on its attack rolls for the first round of combat.
- **Success by 3-5.** The Dragon will have Disadvantage on its attack rolls for the first two rounds of combat.
- **Success of 6+.** The Dragon will be Surprised for the first round of combat and have Disadvantage for the next two rounds as it shakes off it lethargy.

Final Audience Check

If the Company is speaking to the Dragon to buy time as part of a stratagem or is trying to convince the Dragon of some other course of action, use **Traditions** as normal.

- **Failure. Lunchtime!** The Dragon attacks immediately, with sudden fury. This counts as an Ambush.
- **Success by 0-2**. This has been an amusing diversion. The Dragon stirs itself and prepares to attack. The Company has a brief moment to flee or prepare some stratagem.
- **Success by 3-5.** You are a most charming group. The Dragon permits the Company to leave. He'll still hunt them down at his leisure, of course, but he would prefer that they bring word of his magnificence to Erebor. Let them be heralds of the destruction to come!
- **Success by 6+.** Have you considered a career as a sycophant? The Dragon demands that one or more of the Company stay with him as advisers (or entertainers).

Insulting the Dragon, or refusing any of his generous offers, triggers an immediate attack.

– PART SEVEN –
SLAYING THE DRAGON

The battle with the Dragon is going to be a complex fight, and differs in parts depending on whether the heroes are battling Raenar (see pages 104-5 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*) or Wruenele.

THE WRATH OF THE DRAGON

The longer it takes the Company to reach the Watchtower, the more powerful the Dragon has become. This is represented by reducing the number of Preparation dice (see page 73) by the number of Hunt Episodes, to a minimum of 0 dice. Whenever the Company tries to employ whatever preparations or assistance they've earned, somehow the Dragon is aware of it and quickly negates it.

RAENAR THE PLUNDERER

His flames rekindled by some sorcerous power, Raenar is a land-bound Dragon of great age and power. See page 104 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide* for his tactics in battle. The only difference is that instead of **Poison Blast**, he has **Fire Breath** (see below). Using **Fire Breath** triggers **Weak Spot** just like **Poison Blast.**

Actions

Fire Breath (Recharge 5-6). As an action, Raenar exhales fire in a 50-ft cone. Each creature in that area must make a **DC 18 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 52 (15d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

WRUENELE THE FIERY

The younger Wruenele can fly, in order to attempt to prevent the Company from using his Weak Spot to their advantage. But he is easily made over-confident and could easily be goaded into attacking an archer close-up, only to be ambushed by hidden companions.

WRUENELE

Huge Dragon (Full-Grown Fire-drake)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)

Armour Class 20
Hit Points 225 (18d12 + 108)
Speed 20 ft, fly 60 ft. (see below)

Saving Throws Constitution +10, Wisdom +5, Charisma +9
Skills Lore +7, Perception +5, Riddle +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 15
Languages Westron
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP))

Weak Spot. If Wruenele uses a special ability that uses an action (**Fire Breath**), any heroes that are within range may use their reaction to make a single attack. For this attack only, he is vulnerable to Piercing, Slashing and Bludgeoning damage.
Winged. Wruenele has a flying speed of 60 ft.

Actions

Multiattack. Wruenele makes a Bite attack, a Rend attack, and either another Rend attack or Tail-Lash attack.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft, one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d8+7) piercing damage.
Rend. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft, one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6+7) slashing damage.
Tail-Lash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft, one target. *Hit:* 13 (1d12+7) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must make a **DC 19 Strength** saving throw or be knocked Prone.
Fire Breath (Recharge 5-6). As an action, Wruenele exhales fire in a 40-ft cone. Each creature in that area must make a **DC 17 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Reactions

Baleful Gaze. As a reaction, when a creature Wruenele can see makes an ability check, he may impose Disadvantage on the roll. The creature must be able to see Wruenele and the Dragon must not be Incapacitated for this effect to apply

The Orcs

As if a Dragon were not bad enough, the Company may also need to contend with the Orcs from the valley, if they were unable to sneak past them. The Dragon has no regard for the lives of the Orcs, and will not hesitate to use its breath even if it also catches a few 'followers' in the blast.

Tricks & Traps

The Company might employ one or more of these stratagems:

The Falling Block

The old Dwarf-trap in the Great Hall can be used to pin the Dragon. One member of the Company must lure or drive the Dragon through the gate, while another springs the trap. The falling block inflicts 38 (7d10) points of bludgeoning damage. The Dragon is considered Grappled by the block until it uses its action and succeeds at a **DC 30 Strength (Athletics)** check.

Striking From Below

The rift offers plenty of hiding places where a single spear-wielder could conceal themselves, waiting for the Dragon to pass. If the hero spends Inspiration, the Dragon's Weak Spot is exposed for a brief moment. This will only work once, as afterwards the Dragon will be exceedingly wary of attacks from beneath.

The Fatted Goat

The Dragon gets sleepy after a big meal. If the Dragon is sleepy, he is at Disadvantage on attack rolls until he rouses himself, which takes one or two rounds of combat (see page 93).

Running the Battle

The Dragons employ different tactics.

Raenar

Raenar is cautious and protective of his hoard. He'll use his breath weapon to clear the Watchtower of any intruders; only when he's sure that the mountain is empty will he close the main gate and crawl out the rift. He attacks methodically, ripping the fiercest foes to pieces before turning on less dangerous enemies.

Fighting Raenar in the close quarters of the mountain is foolish; the Company need to get him outside where they can attack him with ranged weapons and avoid his fire breath.

Wruenele

Wruenele's chief advantages are agility and fierceness, not tactics. He takes to the air as soon as he can, treating the Company like goats to be scorched and hunted, not foes to be respected.

To defeat Wruenele, the Company need to bring him down to earth as swiftly as they can, or he will scorch them one by one with his breath weapon.

- Epilogue -

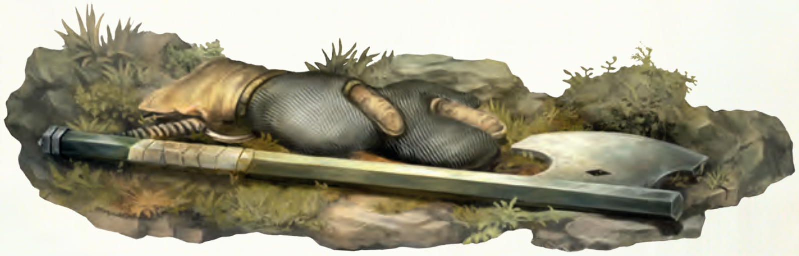
The Dragon is dead! Erebor is once again secure!

Immediately after the Dragon perishes, a fierce snowstorm blows down from the north. Is this blizzard the result of the Dragon's unnatural fires being quenched, allowing winter to reclaim its rightful place in the mountains? Or was this storm sent from the Dark Lord, his wrath made manifest as another of his plans is ruined by the adventurers?

Either way, the snow gives the Company cover to escape the remaining Orcs; however, they must leave directly and they will be exceedingly hard pressed to haul away the Dragon's entire hoard. The Orcs will hunt them if they do not move at speed. The hoard, of course, rightfully belongs to King Dáin, but the King under the Mountain will reward the adventurers as agreed from his own treasury once they return to Erebor. Depending on what they leave behind, Dáin may well swiftly send an armed force to quietly claim it before any rumours can spread.

Of the other would-be Dragon slayers:

- If Khuldri survives the House of Brech, he goes mad and runs into the waste to die. Some say his brother's ghost hounded him to atone for his misdeeds.
- If Elstan survives, he retires to a little cottage in Dale and puts aside his weapons. A companion might earn the Aegis of Dale by taking the Receive Title undertaking in Dale. If he died, King Bard sends adventurers out to find his remains and raise a cairn over them.
- If Greystroke survives, she vanishes again – no doubt going in search of some better death than a Dragon. Her path must therefore bring her south, to the land of Gondor and the coming battle with the armies of Mordor.
- And if Skirfira survives, she has seen a Dragon at last. She returns to Erebor to write a practical manual on Dragon-slaying.
- As few know of the Dragon's presence, the Company do not suddenly become famous throughout Wilderland for their valiant deed; however, the Elves and the Wise soon know what they have done, and in their future dealings with such folk, their deeds will be acknowledged and granted respect accordingly.



- DARK WATERS -

FOR HEROES OF LEVEL 10 OR 11

- **When**: The adventure is presented as set in the spring of 2961, but can take place at any time after 2958, with minimal adjustments.
- **Where:** The action takes place among the houses of Lake-town, and below them.
- **What:** A bronze statue of Bard is being completed for the forthcoming Dragontide celebrations. Orsmid, the craftsman responsible for the statue, has gone missing. The companions are asked to find him by Orsmid's apprentice, a young woman named Magan.
- **Why:** The companions are among the people who saw the craftsman before the disappearance. Magan knows of their deeds, and she is confident they will be able to find Orsmid.
- **Who:** Orsmid, master smith and sculptor; Orsmid's apprentice, Magan, and Odvarr, former friend to Orsmid and head of the new Guild of Artisans of Lake-town. Linnon, an ambitious and greedy Raft-elf, and finally, the Guttermaw.
- **Themes:** The Company have faced Dragons and betrayals on all sides, this adventure sends them to Lake-town for a bit of relaxation before the Sorcerer makes his final strike. But when a sculptor disappears, honourable heroes have no choice but to become involved.

Adventuring Phase

The adventure is divided into seven parts.

Part One - At the Sign of The Pike and Eel

A large rainstorm forces the Company to take refuge at an inn along Bridge street. While there, the companions hear rumours of a monstrous creature seen swimming in the River Running, as well as plans for this year's Dragontide festival. Toasts are made to celebrate the life and success of Orsmid, who is in attendance. Later that same night, Orsmid encounters Odvarr, a former friend, and falls into the waters of the Lake.

Part Two - The Apprentice

Two days later, the companions are called to a meeting at Orsmid's workshop, where they meet Magan. She asks them to find Orsmid, who never returned home after the party.

Part Three - Tales, Secrets, and Lies

The search begins at *The Pike and Eel*, the inn from the night of the rainstorm. There, the Company hears witnesses describe a late night argument between Orsmid and another man. They soon learn that this man matches the description of Odvarr, the head of the Guild of Artisans.

Part Four - The Guild of Artisans

The Company meets with Odvarr, the leader of the Guild. Truth and deception mix in this meeting and it is likely that both Odvarr and the companions will urgently seek what exactly happened to Orsmid on the night of the storm.

Part Five - Elf-stones and Dwarven Gold

The heroes must navigate the dangerous political waters of Lake-town as they negotiate with the Wood-elves' emissary in order to speak with the Dwarven gem-cutters of the Glittering Gate. With success, they learn that more than an old metalworker is missing.

Part Six - Whispers in the Dark

A stranger has a lead on the missing smith but following up on it means that the Company will have to venture into parts of Lake-town where few dare to venture. Before they can rescue Orsmid, the heroes are caught!

Part Seven - Flotsam and Jetsam

The companions must break free in order to save Orsmid and the Mornamir. But then the Guttermaw comes.

Epilogue - The Past is Never That

Both Orsmid and Odvarr (if he still lives) must face the consequences of their recent and not so recent actions.

Past Lives

Odvarr, the Guild-master, and Orsmid, the sculptor, are two respectable citizens of Lake-town, but they were very different when they were young. Born from poor families, the two met on the streets of Lake-town when they were still teenage boys. At the time, they were hoping to become rich by stealthily reducing the load of many a merchant boat; trade back then was not as prosperous as today, but the two got lucky at times, and came to enjoy their life as petty thieves.

One summer, a boat came to Lake-town from the distant south, carrying precious fabrics and gems to sell to the Elvenking. On a moonless night, Odvarr and Orsmid climbed its side, and silently crawled below deck. There, among crates and bales of cloth, the burglars experienced a sight they would never forget: dozens of glittering jewels lie wrapped in silk and velvet, a hoard worthy of a Dragon, and in the middle of them, the Mornamir, a large gem cut like a drop of black crystal, sitting in a crystal casket!

Orsmid and Odvarr were completely spellbound by the sight of the wondrous gem, and almost didn't hear the peal of bells sounding the alarm: Odvarr was the first to bolt, a handful of white gems in his pockets. A sailor took a swing to his face with a blazing torch as he emerged on the deck, but he managed to jump into the lake and swim away. Left alone in the hold of the boat, Orsmid sat still in the dark, listening to the steps of the seamen running after Odvarr and unable to wrestle his eyes from the Mornamir. Then, his hands trembling, Orsmid opened the crystal casket, took the gem and ran.

He doesn't remember exactly what happened next. Orsmid woke up soaking wet in the hold of a fisherman's boat moored among the timbers of Lake-town, with a red-feathered arrow sticking from his side and the weight of the precious stone in his pouch.

Shortly after their nasty experience, Orsmid and Odvarr parted ways, both considering their thieving days to be over. Orsmid became an apprentice to a smith and never said anything about the Mornamir to anyone, while Odvarr used his ill-gotten wealth cunningly, slowly building a good position as a merchant. Many years passed, without them ever speaking again of what they saw that night.

Many Years Later

Smaug's death dramatically changed the lives of Orsmid and Odvarr. The smith distinguished himself fighting in the Battle of Five Armies and was involved by King Bard in rebuilding Lake-town and Dale, acquiring a reputation as one of the finest craftsmen of the region. On his part, Odvarr found himself in the perfect position to profit from the growing importance of Lake-town as a trading port and became one of the wealthiest traders in the city, dealing mainly with wares produced by the many artisans of Lake-town. After long years of political manoeuvring and manipulating, Odvarr has succeeded in gaining the trust of the majority of the city's craftsmen and was recently elected deacon of the newly-formed Guild of Artisans.

But the past is never fully buried. When Orsmid presented to the public the wondrous black gem he was going to use as the head of the Black Arrow on his statue of Bard the Bowman, Odvarr recognised the Mornamir and finally knew what really happened in that darkened hold below deck, so many years ago. Both shame for fleeing and jealousy of the jewel stirred hatred in his heart for his former friend.

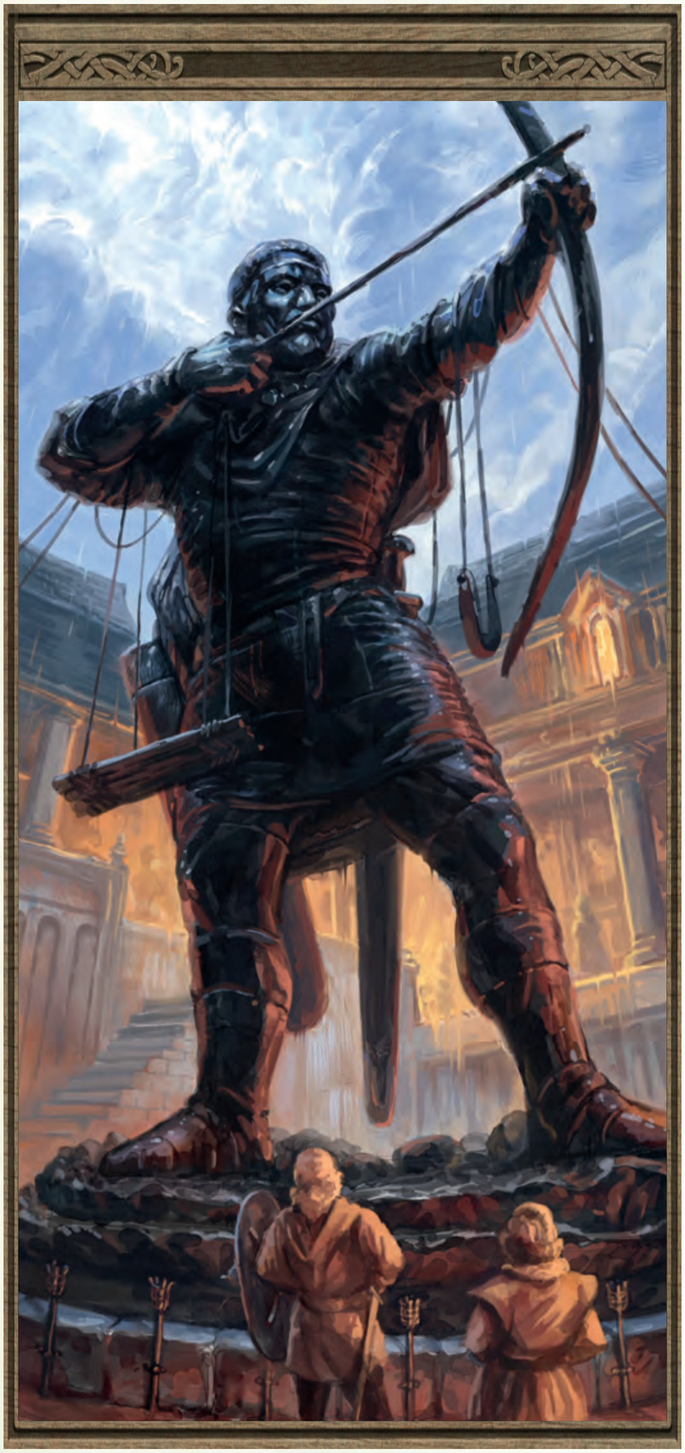
- PART ONE -
AT THE SIGN OF THE PIKE AND EEL

The adventure begins in the spring of the year 2961, while the Company is in Lake-town. The spring so far has been a very wet one, with Lake-town's citizens waking up most mornings to the sound of the falling rain, and bedding down at night to the low rumble of thunder echoing across the surface of the Long Lake.

THE STATUE

It is early evening when the companions find themselves in the Market square of Lake-town. They have come to have a look at the bronze statue being erected for the forthcoming twentieth annual Dragontide celebrations (if the adventure is set in 2961). The monument, to be officially uncovered on the Day of the Black Arrow (the first of November), will be a 20-foot tall figure of Bard drawing his great bow, sponsored by the town's Guild of Artisans.

What can be seen for the moment is that the impressive statue is cast and assembled on a stone platform, but its features are rough and incomplete, as the artist has yet to start the lengthy stages of chasing and polishing its metal surface. The details of the face are vague, and the arrow is conspicuously missing its arrowhead. Companions



who have been in Lake-town the previous month know that Orsmid, the sculptor working on the statue, publicly announced that the Black Arrow will be topped by a marvellous black gem, the like of which has never been seen since the recovery of the hoard of the Dragon. As the companions exchange their considerations about the work of art they came to admire, a sudden, heavy downpour sweeps the town, forcing them to take refuge in *The Pike and Eel*, an inn situated at the end of Bridge Street, just before the Market square. It is not long before many folk, locals and travellers alike, find themselves packed into the crowded quarters of the common room.

Clouds and Storms

The rain and thunderstorms of the season provide atmosphere in this adventure. The themes of misdirection and hidden intentions can be strongly reinforced with visual cues from the Loremaster. Lank damp hair beneath sodden hoods, puddle-filled streets, and swollen waterways should feature prominently, and a near-constant drizzle of rain should fall from a grey and turbulent sky.

It is Safer Indoors

The Pike and Eel is a small inn that is especially popular with fishermen and fishmongers. It is owned by Nefgeir, a stern but well-meaning man with a reputation for serving the best beer outside of Erebor. The common room of the inn is not only a comfortable place to weather the storm and get some hot fish soup in one's belly, but a fine spot to share stories and take comfort in the renewed fellowship of the Free Folk of the North.

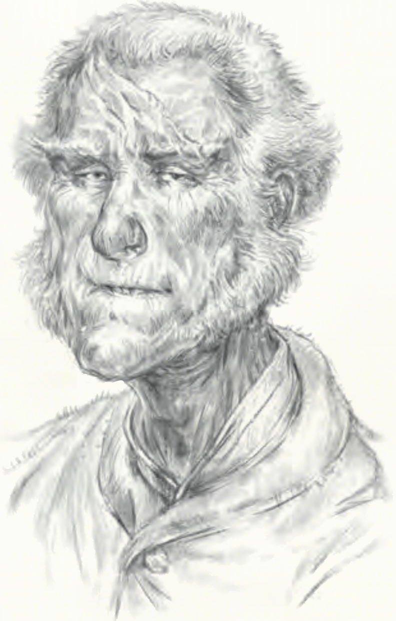
The Loremaster should present this opening episode as a free-form roleplaying scene, an opportunity for the Player-heroes to have a bit of fun without the weight and responsibility of great deeds laid out before them as in previous adventures. The aim of this part of the adventure is to seed information about forthcoming events, but the Loremaster can also use it to plant their own adventure hooks, see familiar faces, or introduce important Loremaster characters of their own creation.

The following paragraphs describe the main characters involved in the current story. The information provided represents how the various characters behave and present themselves to the companions (it does not include details a character wishes to remain secret). Instead of formal Audiences, some characters have information they will reveal only if the heroes are persistent.

Nefgeir, the Innkeeper

The innkeeper has seen good times and bad over the course of his 60 years. His hair and prodigious sideburns have long since gone grey, and his voice is like the sound of stone breaking. Nefgeir was once an accomplished fisherman, a career that left him with a great store of patience, a useful virtue in his line of work. After the destruction of the old Esgaroth, Nefgeir abandoned his former trade and opened the inn.

The innkeeper views the running of *The Pike* with great severity, as many suppliers and customers have learned to their cost. This notwithstanding, he is welcoming to strangers and a kind word and a bit of respect for **Traditions** goes a long way with him.



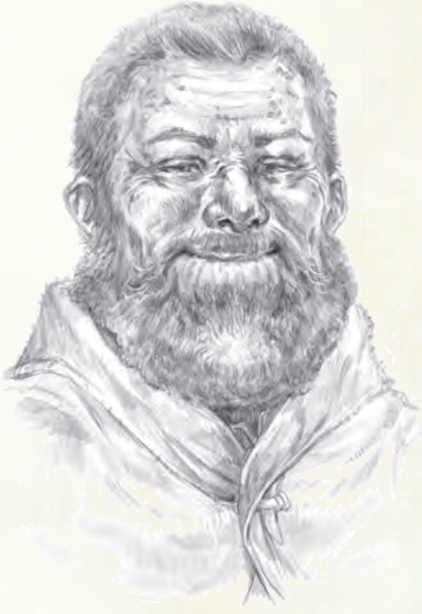
Orsmid, Metalworker

Sitting by the table closest to the fire and drinking alone is Orsmid, a man that doesn't seem to belong to the usual crowd of merchants and fishermen. He is a smith and a sculptor, working with all kinds of metals, currently tasked by the town council to create the bronze statue of Bard the Bowman. A wiry, dark grey beard covers a face, which is missing a few teeth, while deep crags on his face and hands betray Orsmid's true age: the master smith has spent almost seven decades upon Middle-earth.

Orsmid, like Nefgeir, has witnessed the destruction that Smaug brought to the old city. The sculptor and the innkeeper seem to appreciate one another's company in that way that old men who have shared a hardship are wont to do.

Despite being born in Lake-town and claiming to be a full-blooded native of Esgaroth, Orsmid counts himself among King Bard's staunchest supporters and he speaks about the Bowman in a manner more befitting a young man talking about his hero. He fought by Bard's side as a spearman at the Battle of Five Armies: he bears a nasty scar to show for it, a puckered pale ridge striking across his chest, a gift from a Great Bat.

Orsmid is a humble fellow and though he graciously thanks well-wishers and admirers of his work, he spends most of the evening slowly sipping at his ale and smiling warmly at the younger patrons celebrating around him. Not a man who is prone to talking, a companion might get



him to open up a bit with a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Performance)** check or talk of his craft. He might speak of how pleased he is to be able to devote his talent to the legacy of Lake-town before he's *"too old to be of much use"* and then broadly grinning. If asked about the black gem to serve as the Black Arrow's head, Orsmid says only that he is honoured to contribute to the lasting glory of Bard with his own personal treasure.

Magan, Apprentice to Orsmid

At some point during the evening, a tall young woman enters the inn and approaches Orsmid with a concerned look in her eyes. They seem to know each other very well, and after a brief exchange, Orsmid dismisses her with a nod and a paternal smile. If the companions are talking to Orsmid when the woman arrives, they are introduced briefly to Magan, Orsmid's apprentice. She came just to recommend her master not to stay up all night, as he will need his strength for the following morning's work. When Orsmid agrees to her recommendation, she leaves.

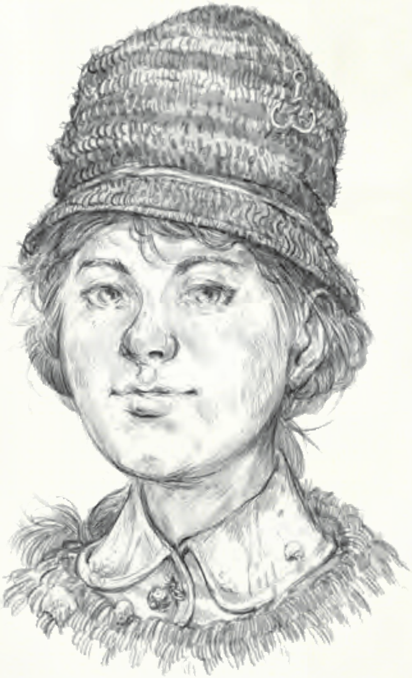
Holti, Antique Dealer

A middle-aged merchant visiting from Dale, where he owns a curiosity shop. He is a man always on the lookout for a deal, or continually making things out to be more valuable than they are. With an unflinching smile and disturbingly nice teeth, Holti is in Lake-town to determine if there is coin to be made by hauling some of his 'valuables' here for the anniversary celebrations. He wears a ridiculous hat which sprouts two brightly coloured feathers.

If approached, Holti is amiable but lets the companions know it's *'after hours'* and business can wait until morning. If they press — a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion)** check or by invoking the Trading trait — he'll make comments about news of the Dwarven gem-cutters of the Glittering Gate experiencing a peculiar absence of precious stones and the associated rise in price, something he finds odd.

Haldis

A fisherwoman, Haldis is young and bright-eyed, her clothes always smelling faintly of fish. She wears a small golden fish hook tucked into her hat as a lucky charm. Unlike many of her lake-going peers, Haldis fishes in the waters below Lake-town itself. Smaller quarry to be sure, and considered unwholesome by other fishermen, who in truth ignore how Haldis manages to catch the fish that dart among the timbers of the city.



Haldis is held by other patrons to be very quiet, too quiet than is considered normal, to say the truth. And when Haldis talks not everyone is able to make head or tails of what she says. But she is harmless and good-natured, and everyone loves her. If approached politely with a **DC 10 Intelligence (Traditions)** check, Haldis shares a number of sinister stories about town children who have gone missing. According to her, they were devoured by the 'Guttermaw', a creature escaped from the deepest recesses of the Lonely Mountain and is now swimming in the waters of the Long Lake.

Eutaric of Woodland Hall

Called 'Shepherd' by his friends, Eutaric is a Woodman of Mirkwood, in Lake-town to visit the family of his wife, Aefre. Small by the standards of Men, with a short brown beard and shaggy hair, he bears a finely crafted bow that is worn with years of use. Eutaric is quick with a jest and free with his coin when buying drinks and will respond favourably to simple courtesy or to True-hearted individuals. He is always eager to hear tales from throughout Wilderland.

Despite his friendly demeanour, a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** check suggests that Eutaric is intently searching the crowd for someone (in truth, he is hunting for an old enemy and the trip to visit his wife's family is but an excuse to seek out his quarry. He will not speak of it, unless befriended by a fellow Woodman).

Aefre

Aefre, wife to Eutaric, is a Barding. She is the daughter of Arn, the chieftain of a family of herders from the Upper Marches. Some years ago, Eutaric was passing through the lands to the east of Dale and managed to impress Arn over the course of one summer. Finding himself with a thinning herd and ever more mouths to feed, Arn was quick to send Aefre off to marry Eutaric. Though initially an arrangement, their bond grew into a loving one and Aefre now oversees the affairs of their home in Woodland Hall. She is gentle but firm, and is very skilled at resolving the small disputes that can arise amongst folk on a farmstead.

Aefre is capable of seeing through simple deceptions, and can often tell the heart of a person with a glance. She is short with a sweet nature and a crooked smile. She responds favourably to any hero who has a pet, and a **DC 10 Intelligence (Nature)** or **Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check will see her greet the companions almost as family.

LATER INTO THE NIGHT

Well before midnight, some of the storm's intensity fades, but there is still a persistently heavy rainfall. There is space available at the inn if the Company chooses to stay there. A hero can hire out a smaller sumptuous room for 2s a night or a Company-sized room for 75c. Companions wanting more affordable lodging can stay in the common room for 5c instead. Companions with other lodgings who insist on returning there can make it, but will arrive home soaking wet.

- For the purpose of this adventure, it is important that the companions pay no particular attention to Orsmid the metalworker leaving the tavern some time after midnight. If they didn't befriend him it is easy to just avoid mentioning him leaving at all. If one or more companions pay close attention to what he is doing, just have him find an excuse to leave on his own, maybe even taking offense if someone offers to accompany him or to follow him.

Sometime before sunrise, the rain lets up to a light drizzle. If the companions are still at the inn, the smell of simmering broth and baking bread coming from the kitchen is enough to wake up even the late risers. Many of the other occupants have left before the dawn to return to their daily responsibilities, though perhaps with an aching head to accompany them.

If the companions have other tasks to occupy them in Lake-town, let them get to it. Two days later they will be summoned to Orsmid's workshop.

- PART TWO -
THE APPRENTICE

Orsmid works in one of the largest buildings in the Artisans' District of Lake-town. The high-ceilinged warehouse serves the craftsman well, as he needs a workshop that can house the large furnace and heavy tools he uses for casting the separate pieces of his larger bronze statuary. A smaller forge is used for melting other metals, as Orsmid occasionally works also as a blacksmith and coppersmith, making iron tools and copper wares, like weather-vanes, plates, and pots. The smith works and lives in his workshop, sharing the place with his apprentice, Magan.

Magan has not seen or heard from Orsmid since the night of the storm, now two nights ago. Beginning to fear the worst, and not wishing to create gossip, Magan turns to the Company for help. She saw them at *The Pike and Eel,* possibly talking to her master, and she has additionally heard tales of their recent accomplishments (such as saving her aunt Kelda in **The Silver Needle**). Magan hires a street urchin to bring them a simple message: *'Your assistance is requested in a delicate matter related to the planning of this year's Dragontide celebrations.'*

THE YOUNG DISCIPLE

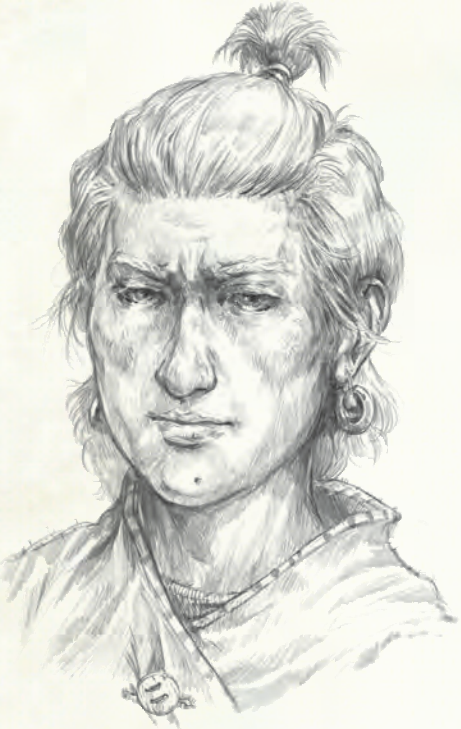
Magan meets the Company at Orsmid's workshop. Tools and materials cover every corner of a space clearly used primarily for work, together with several wax models and clay prototypes for the statue of Bard. Magan receives her guests in her workwear, her pale hair cut shorter than is fashionable and tied back with a bit of leather scrap.

Motivation and Expectations

Magan loves Orsmid as a father-figure and makes no effort to disguise her affection for the old man. As a crafter she's fond of Dwarf-folk and the Company gains an automatic +1 Expectation if there are any Dwarves present. Apply a -2 Expectation modifier if the heroes are dismissive of her master or criticise her decision to become a sculptor and smith.

Introduction

Magan has sought out the Company specifically. Any Barding, Dwarf, or Man of the Lake will have Advantage on their initial **Traditions** check.



Interaction

Magan begins with earnestness, but as the conversation progresses, her voice takes on a more familiar tone as her emotional investment starts to win through:

'For six years I have served as an apprentice to Orsmid, whose home you are now standing in. His is a rare and precious trade, and I am honoured to be his disciple and heir. He is not a young man, and he intends to have me take over his workshop when he finally decides to retire, but he seems to maintain a bottomless vitality that I do not begrudge him. You may have heard, he has been tasked by the Guild of Artisans to sculpt the statue of King Bard that you have seen in the square.

Now, my master has gone missing. Two nights ago he left the workshop to go at The Pike and Eel, *as is his custom after a hard day of work. Two days without as much as a word or note is not like him at all, and he would never vanish while working on such a prestigious task! That is why I fear for his safety.*

Would you help me find my master? Word of your deeds has reached us, even here in our workshop, and I hope that you may prove able to locate him.'

What do the Companions Know about that Night?

The companions were at *The Pike* the night Orsmid disappeared, so it is entirely natural that they will attempt to draw some conclusions based on what they witnessed there. Each Loremaster must answer the question individually, as it is impossible to predetermine what the companions did while at the inn. Did they befriend any of the patrons that night? Did they sleep at the inn or leave early? Did they see Orsmid leaving?

The companions will probably have several questions to pose to Magan, to get a better picture of Orsmid as a man, and to know what clues there may be about his disappearance. The Loremaster should use any part of the following dialogue to answer the Company's questions.

"Orsmid has no family to speak of. He lost everything in the destruction of the old Lake-town, and he helped in the building of the new. But I don't know much, as he doesn't talk about his past. I had always assumed that his family died in the fires."

"Though he is friendly to all that he meets, I don't think he has anyone in his life that he is particularly close to, other than myself, or the innkeeper at The Pike *on Bridge street. I can't help but think there is some past tragedy that I am not aware of that keeps him so solitary."*

"His commission for the statue was handled through the new town Guild of Artisans. Orsmid was initially surprised when they chose him to complete this great work, but was excited and honoured."

"Orsmid took me in six summers ago. I was born in Dale, my mother was sickly throughout much of my childhood and I largely raised myself. I have always been big for my age, and strong, and as a youngster I was fascinated by the superior skill of the Dwarven smiths of my hometown. I had dreamed of being taken as an apprentice to one of them, but I had no one to pay for it."

"I was losing all hope when Orsmid caught me stealing bread in the Market square of Dale. He was there to buy ore and charcoal and took more pity on me than he should have. I have been living with him ever since. He's all the family I have, I owe him everything."

"I don't believe Orsmid has any enemies. I can't imagine anyone wanting to do the old man harm. His customers are satisfied, and recently he is enjoying a measure of fame since the construction of the statue has started. I suppose it's possible that some may be jealous of his success, but I can't imagine who that might be."

If asked about the black gem that Orsmid intended to use as the head of the Black Arrow, Magan answers with some reluctance.

"It is my master's greatest treasure. A great black jewel, as wide as my open hand and tapering at one end. I do not know from whence it came, I only know it has been in my master's possession as long as I have known him. He allowed me to look upon it but once before the presentation. I don't know where he keeps it, and I fear it might be missing too."

Resolution

If the Company agrees to search for Orsmid, make a Final Audience check. Having offered up what information and reward she might, Magan returns to her work. She can be found here in the following days.

Failure. Magan is desperate. She worries that time is not on her side, and that her master may be lying injured somewhere. She doesn't think much of the adventurers, so once they've left, she will ask Odvarr at the Guild of Artisans for help. Add +**1** Expectation if the heroes meet with Odvarr in *Part Four: The Guild of Artisans* as he will already expect them and be prepared.

Success by 0–2. Magan's immediate panic is soothed, though she is still fearful. If they can return Orsmid safely, she offers the companions 20 silver pieces each, taken from her own meagre earnings as an apprentice (she is unaware how little that is likely to be from the Company's perspective).

Success by 3–5. Magan offers the reward as above, but the Company has also raised her spirits somewhat. If Orsmid lives, she now believes the companions may be able to find him. Magan offers additional reward in the form of professional assistance sometime in the future (see below).

Success by 6+. Magan's heart has been rekindled with renewed hope. In addition to the previous two results, should the companions prove successful, she invites them to be official guests of herself and Orsmid at the ceremony for the completion of the statue. (See the *Epilogue* on page 118).

Magan's Help

The exact nature of this help can take many forms and will be determined by individual groups. If using the rules for Holdings (*Mirkwood Campaign*, page 9) perhaps Magan can make or repair metal wares, or reinforce doors or window frames, potentially improving the Holding's rating by 1 point.

Alternately, Magan is adventurous enough to help in many instances where metalworking might be helpful, such as *Restoring the Old Forest Road* (*Mirkwood Campaign* page 31) or other such Fellowship phase endeavours.

– PART THREE –
TALES, SECRETS AND LIES

This part of the adventure assumes that the companions start investigating the disappearance of Orsmid, and that they return to *The Pike and Eel* to talk to folk they may have met there.

Nefgeir the Witness

If the Loremaster finds it convenient, or if the players need some help in figuring out what's going on, an additional detail can be added to Nefgeir's backstory. If this option is chosen, then Nefgeir is the fisherman who many years ago recovered a wounded Orsmid from the waters of the lake. Orsmid knows he owes his life to Nefgeir, as he recognised the boat on which he woke up, but the two never talked about what really happened that night. This secret is the shared experience that forged their friendship.

BACK AT THE INN

The *Pike and Eel* offers a different sight during the day: the windows are open, and the daylight chases away the shadows from the darkest corners. The innkeeper is there, naturally, and a handful of regular patrons sit at the tables, generally eating rather than drinking. Haldis, the fisherwoman, is conspicuously missing from the patrons the companions encountered that night.

10 Nefgeir

The innkeeper is found at the inn during most hours of the day, as it is both his home and livelihood. If the Company befriended Nefgeir previously, or if they're staying at the inn, he greets them with a smile and makes offers of food or drink (the companions have Advantage on any checks as long as they remain polite, paying customers).

A **DC 15 Intelligence (Traditions)** check reveals that Orsmid left the Inn just after midnight, while it was still raining fairly heavily. While Nefgeir doesn't have much to add to the investigation at hand, having him as a friend may pay off in other ways, for example, maybe the Company can use the inn as a base for the investigation.

Aefre and Eutaric

The Company may also track down Aefre easily. She and her husband are staying at the inn over the next few days, and while Eutaric is gone in the daytime, Aefre awaits a visit from her father, so can be found in the common room or out about the Market square.

Aefre can provide a very valuable lead for the companions: well after midnight on the night of the storm, Orsmid took his leave of the inn, but did not make it very far.

"I thought it peculiar that the old man was leaving so late, and in such weather. Still, he seemed in a cheerful mood and the wine had only brightened his eyes. When he left I stepped out after him to watch the rain for a while. It was then that I saw Orsmid over by the Market-pool and he was not alone. There, standing in the rain, he and another man were having an argument! I thought at first to get Eutaric to break up a tussle if need be, but something about the way the men spoke to one another suggested to me that they were old acquaintances. I suddenly found myself feeling a bit foolish for spying on two old men! I went back inside and it wasn't long before I retired for the night."

If asked to describe the other man, Aefre can provide some details.

"I didn't get too close a look at him, though he seemed to be of an age with Orsmid. But I can tell you this, his face seemed to bear a horrible disfigurement on one side, as though burned by fire."

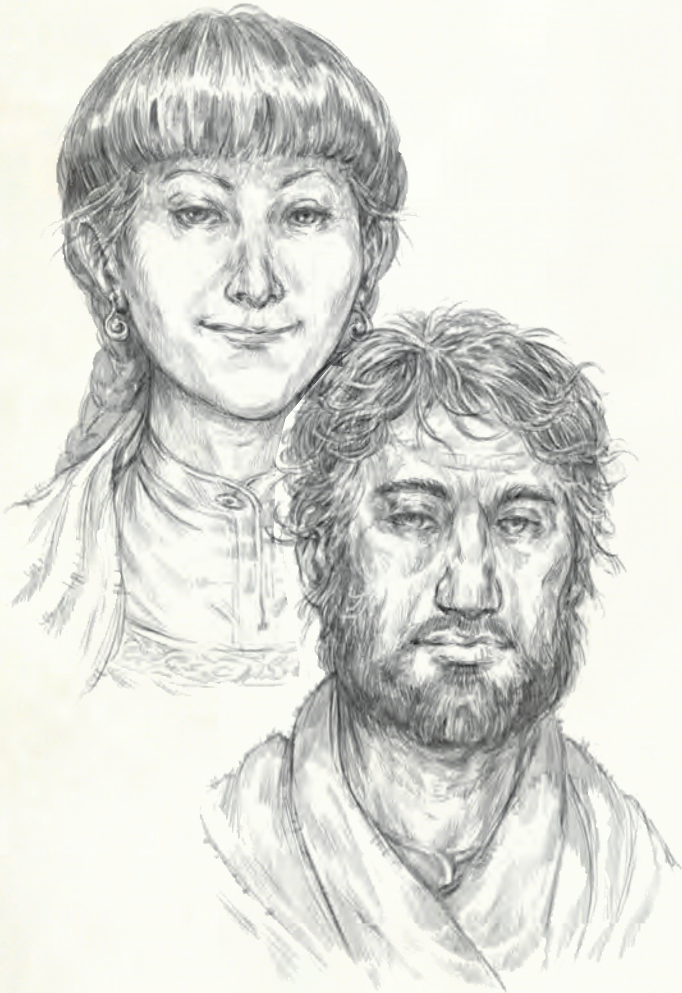
The Guttermaw

Everyone in Lake-town has heard something about the water serpent haunting the waters of the Long-lake, even though no one has seen it. Some say it's the cursed spawn of Smaug returned to avenge the Dragon, others laugh at the nonsense and say it must be a marsh drake, arrived from the East following a trading boat. Those believing themselves the wisest say it's only a monstrous eel or a gigantic catfish.

For the length of the investigation, Loremasters are encouraged to come up with their own fantastical details about the 'Guttermaw' and to weave them into the testimonies of those the companions interrogate in their search for Orsmid. The blame for any wrongdoing should be put on the creature, from accidental deaths to the fever of a child — by the end of the adventure, the companions should have heard enough about it to be entirely sure it's just a rumour.

If asked about the whereabouts of her husband, she informs the companions that he is visiting old friends in the city and purchasing supplies for their journey home.

If the companions return to ask Nefgeir about the burned man and give a description, he will easily identify the man as Odvarr, the head of Lake-town's Guild of Artisans. The guild is a new association, created a few years ago for the mutual assistance of all the craftsmen of the city, following the example set by the powerful Guild of Merchants.



Holti

Holti too stays at *The Pike*, and can be found perusing the Market square throughout the day. Drifting from stall to stall, he is an easy fellow to spot, due to the feathers in his cap, as he looks for deals to make or people to swindle. Holti didn't have much interaction with Orsmid at the inn as the old man didn't have much patience for Holti's slippery language or merchant's ways. He moved onto easier targets, but only after having a brief conversation with Orsmid about the quality of the inn's beer.

If asked about a black jewel however, a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check causes Holti's eyes light up and with a conspiratorial tone he suggests that the companions head to the Glittering Gate in the Elven quarter to inquire there about stolen jewels.

"You cannot trust any Dwarf with an honest deal when it's gold or precious stones, but it's one thing to make a good profit, another to steal outright! I have heard that the city's current shortage of quality jewellery wasn't a plan of our mountain neighbours, but should rather be investigated among the subjects of the Woodland ruler..."

Holti cannot provide any proof to substantiate the rumour; he can only add that it makes sense to him, as it seems that the 'quality jewellery' that is currently missing from the market refers especially to those white or green precious stones that are called 'Elf-stones' around here.

Is Eutaric the Villain?

Some players may latch onto Eutaric as a potential suspect in the disappearance, given his behaviour at the inn. If the Loremaster wishes, tracking down Eutaric can provide a perfectly fruitless red herring for the companions to chase after. In truth, he is spending his days searching for a man that killed his younger brother many years ago, though he is not yet sure what he will do if he finds him! He is a careful and thoughtful sort, used to spiriting between the trees in the Western Eaves of Mirkwood, but coming so close to resolving this chapter of his life has made him reckless. If the players follow this hunch, Eutaric can be found, though it will require a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check. He can currently be found in the vicinity of the Gatehouse.

– Part Four –
The Guild of Artisans

If the heroes have identified the man who was arguing with Orsmid the night of his disappearance, at some point they will head toward the house of the Guild of Artisans to speak to Odvarr.

The Guild of Artisans of Lake-town was formed five years ago, to protect the business interests of the many craftsmen of the city, as many had come to believe that without organisation, they would be overshadowed by the Guild of Merchants' interests as far as the decisions of the city council are concerned (the council is composed mainly of retired traders).

Their meeting hall is a small two-storey building facing a small square along the Street of Bowyers and Fletchers; the members of the association call it their 'guild house' (and not a 'guild hall') out of deference for the more powerful Guild of Merchants.

During the day, the house serves as a meeting place for the members of the Guild to trade with tool and material suppliers, or to secure commissions. In the evening, the Guild members gather in a smaller room at the back of the building, the Guild tavern, to drink beer as they discuss the events of the day. The private office of the Guild deacon, Odvarr, is on the second floor, as is the room where the board of officers meet.

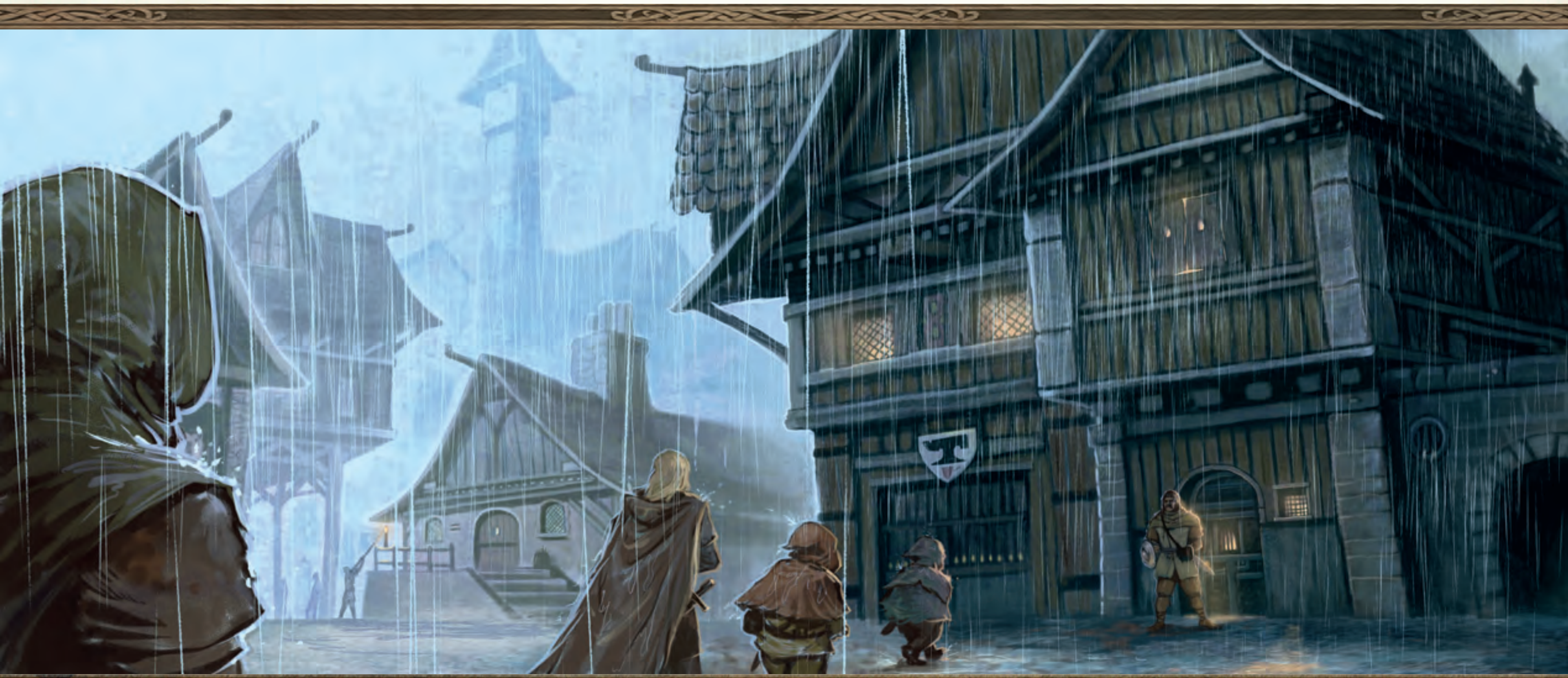
Entering the Guild House

A single guard is stationed at the wooden door of the guild house. The guard carries a buckler and a short sword and looks perfectly comfortable standing out in the rain; with a scowl and a flinty look in his eyes it seems as though he has spent most of his life doing just that.

The guard stops all visitors at the door, and asks to know their business with the guild. The guild house is members only, except by appointment, he explains. If the companions mention Orsmid, the statue, or suggest that they are investigating a crime, after a brief disappearance inside, the guard returns to escort them inside and up a short flight of stairs. As the companions enter the building, the rain strengthens.

At the top of the stairs is the office of the guild deacon. Inside is a room dominated by a shining wooden desk covered in heavily bound ledgers, stacks of parchment, and an iron bound chest. The man behind the desk is no less magisterial, with an embroidered waistcoat of bright colours covering his expansive midsection.

Odvarr seems a man that likes everything in its place, down to the last hair on his head, despite the burn-scarred flesh that covers the right half of his face.



With a nod he dismisses the guard and lights a pipe before gesturing for the companions to take a seat. When he speaks, his scars require him to talk out of the left side of his mouth, giving him a bit of a smirk that is sometimes reflected in the twinkle in his eyes.

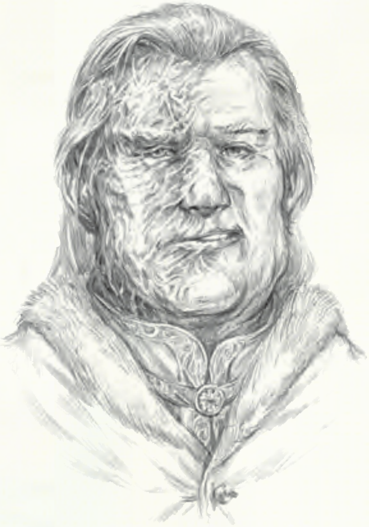
A Dark Conscience

Odvarr believes that he let Orsmid drown, after he saw him fall into the waters of the lake. He was certain that there weren't any witnesses, but now that the companions are here asking about Orsmid, he starts worrying that they might discover something. He is ready to deny any involvement, and will resort to putting the blame on the legendary Guttermaw if the companions leave him no other possibility.

The outcome of the Audience with him will determine how much of a threat Odvarr believes the companions to be.

Expectations

Odvarr has not ascended to this position by being blind to the motivations of other men. Apply a **-2** Expectation modifier if the heroes explicitly seek news of Orsmid or a **+1** modifier if he's been warned by Magan (in which case he is prepared and may become over-confident in his lying).



Introduction

Odvarr is used to dealing with silver-tongued merchants and wealthy landowners, so the companions should introduce themselves with **Traditions** as normal. It will also prove to Odvarr that the Player-heroes are smart enough to know how to approach a man like himself, so they're probably smart enough to cause him trouble. If the players already consider Odvarr a suspect and wish to hide this from him, the speaker can use **Riddle** instead.

Interaction

The companions are either here to question Odvarr about the argument with Orsmid, or to simply follow up on the knowledge that the Guild of Artisans helped arrange Orsmid's commission for the statue. Some likely questions and Odvarr's answers are listed below. The Loremaster should use the information provided as a guide, keeping in mind that Odvarr believes he isn't really responsible for his former friend's death, as he didn't push him into the water. He is both sly and shrewd, and almost every response is a carefully crafted mixture of truths and lies.

- Was the Guild responsible for Orsmid's commission for the statue?

  "I take great pride in saying yes, the Guild of Artisans was instrumental in arranging for Orsmid to be the lead artisan on that grand work. While I am certain our friends the Dwarves would have done an excellent job with stone, the Guild felt that it was only fitting that one of King Bard's subjects should be the one doing the work. And none better than Orsmid, who has served our fine city for so many years."

- Was there a great deal of money at stake?

  "You understand that while I cannot divulge the exact terms of the commission, it the Guild's hope that Orsmid will complete the statue, and in so doing earn enough coin and prestige that he will be able to finally lay down his chisels and get some well-deserved rest in retirement."

- Were you at *The Pike and Eel* two nights ago?

  "I wasn't. I sometimes visit for a late glass of mulled wine, but not that night. I passed by the Market square on my way home, but didn't think about stopping at the inn."

- Someone saw you arguing with Orsmid. Are you and Orsmid old acquaintances? (At this question Odvarr may pause, surprised that there were witnesses to the event. But he is quick enough to answer with a falsehood).

"It was a personal matter. There are some wounds that take a very long time to heal, try as we might. Orsmid and I are old friends, it is true. We have known each other for 25 years now."

- If pressed about the argument, or confronted about seeming nervous or dishonest, Odvarr recovers quickly and with a sigh, feigning a reveal of the truth.

  "The heart of the matter is this: many years ago, there was a woman. Her name was Eofara, and I loved her more than the Dwarves love their Mountain. But her heart belonged to Orsmid. It was... an unpleasant affair. My friendship with Orsmid never recovered. If my regrets were put to paper they would outnumber these ledgers surrounding us. Please do not ask me to speak more of it."

- Did you know that Orsmid is missing?

  "Missing? It's true that I have not seen or spoken to Orsmid since that night. But missing? This is foul news."

- What do you know about Orsmid's black jewel? Do you know that it is also missing? (More than any other, this topic of conversation puts Odvarr on edge, as it was his desire for the black gem that prevented him from rescuing Orsmid. In an effort to hide his uneasiness, and to find what the companions know of the whereabouts of the jewel, he says what he really knows of the stone, taking the chance to cast Orsmid under a negative light).

  "Orsmid's black jewel? That it and Orsmid are missing... these are dark tidings indeed, though not entirely unexpected..."

  Here he takes a deep breath, as if releasing himself from some burden:

  "My friends, I very much doubt that the jewel belonged to Orsmid... When he revealed it to the public, I recognised it from some studies that I made when I was younger. It was called the Mornamir by the Elves, though I don't know for certain where it came from. A local legend say it came from the East, and that it was lost when treacherous Men tried to lure the Elvenking into a trap and kill him. I do not presume to know how he came to possess it, but I am certain that it was not in Orsmid's right to keep it."

Ending the Audience

Once he's answered three or four questions, Odvarr will end the conversation, citing a Guild meeting that he must attend. If the jewel and the disappearance of Orsmid came up during the audience, Odvarr insists he must make preparations to replace Orsmid as the artisan responsible for the statue's completion, and with little time to waste.

Once the companions leave, Odvarr becomes bent on finding the jewel, hoping that Orsmid didn't have it on himself when he fell in the water. Odvarr calls in many favours among the craftsmen of the city in an effort to locate the gem.

Make a Final Audience check to determine Odvarr's assessment of the Company, which will determine his next course of action.

Failure. Odvarr is not impressed with the companions and does not believe them to be any serious threat to him. He will instruct his contacts throughout the city to keep their ears open just in case. The Company might suspect that Odvarr is hiding something, though they won't know what.

Success by 0–2. Odvarr is concerned about the involvement of the companions. He believes that given enough time they may somehow connect Orsmid's death back to him. To protect himself he will divert the companions' suspicions to the legendary Guttermaw, providing at least one witness of the creature's presence under the waters of the lake. The Company might get the distinct impression that Odvarr means them ill, though he would hotly deny it if confronted, dismissing it as 'stress' or some other excuse.

Success by 3–5. Odvarr is seriously worried. He especially fears that the companions may find the Mornamir before he does. He takes all the precautions described above, additionally starting to pay for information in gold. Eventually, someone will direct him to the fisherwoman Haldis, and Odvarr will learn how she witnessed an old man being pulled from the water in the Elven quarter two nights ago.

Success by 6+. The companions get all the information described above. Moreover, they notice that Odvarr was clearly upset by something the Company said, but he is enough of a dissembler that he hid exactly what it was that concerned him. The Company definitely leave with the impression that Odvarr is not trustworthy and that they need to be cautious.

What Really Happened?

Later on the same night when the companions were still inside at *The Pike and Eel* (or after they went home), Odvarr confronted Orsmid in the streets of Lake-town, asking him about the black gem. The discussion quickly escalated into an argument, and the over-excited (and quite drunk) Orsmid took a literal false step and fell from the street into the Long Lake, under the cold stare of Odvarr who stood there, watching him disappear under the dark waters

What Now?

The earlier driving rain has given way to a cold mist that obscures Lake-town, hiding the many alleyways of Esgaroth and making navigation difficult. Hopefully the companions have started to have some ideas about the fate of Orsmid and the jewel. Companions from Lake-town fearing that the Mornamir could have been stolen know that there is only one place where gems are dealt with by merchants, and that is the Glittering Gate, in the Elven quarter.

- Part Five -

Elf-stones and Dwarven Gold

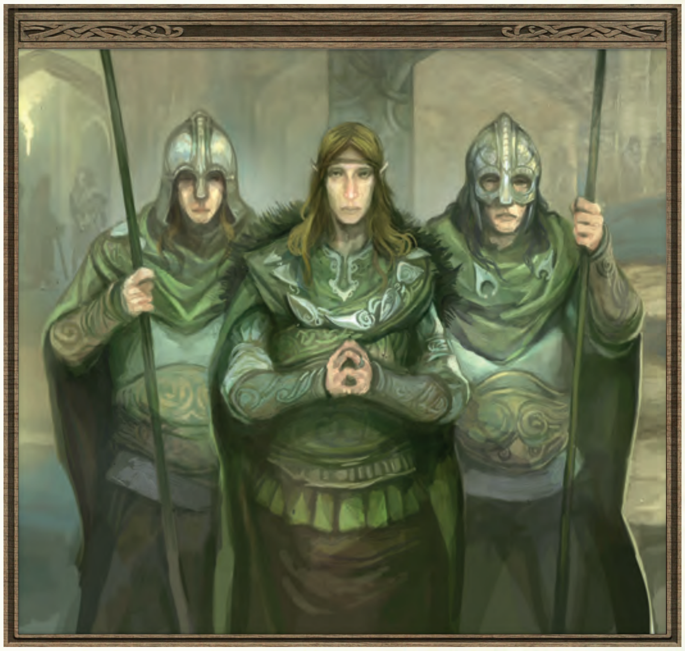
Even in times of pleasant weather the Elven quarter is not necessarily a hospitable place. Occupying the entire southwestern corner of the town, the district is separated from the rest of the city by a canal, and access to it can be gained only by boat or crossing one of its three bridges. When the companions arrive, the rain has softened to a fine cool mist, but dark clouds threaten on the horizon and, as the day wears on, thunder continually grumbles a warning.

A Cold Welcome

A trio of cloaked Wood-elves appear out of the rainy mist to stop the companions as they enter the Elven quarter. Soundless and seemingly untouched by the rain, they carry weapons and wear armour under their cloaks (see the stats for Silvan Elf Sentinels, below).

The way they address the Company varies on whether there are Elves in the group or not: if there are any Elves, the guards start speaking in Elvish, asking about the group's intentions, their tone courteous but firm. If there are no Elves, the guards speak in the Common tongue and request the companions to leave any weapons in their custody. They ask kindly at first, but are ready to resort to more persuasive ways if provoked.

A companion wishing to impress them with their heroic repute can attempt a **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation)** check. A success sees the guards relent from their request and take a step back, while a failure means the Sentinels drive the offending companion from the Elven quarter at spear-point.



The Emissary

If the companions are let free to roam the Elven quarter to carry on their investigation, they eventually bump into Celebril, the emissary of the Woodland Realm currently handling all the Elvenking's business in Lake-town (see the Elf-Lord on page 77 of the *Loremaster's Guide*).

Celebril is not an old Elf by the reckoning of her folk, but she has seen the birth and disappearance of many a realm of

Men in her lifetime, so she has little or no patience for a trifling matter such as a single mortal who has gone missing. This means that she tries to dismiss the companions as quickly as possible, making sure that they are allowed to stay in the Elven quarter for only the shortest time.

The companions must pass a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion)** check (Celebril is Impatient) to convince Celebril to allow them to continue. On a success, the companions are allowed to stay until midday (if they arrived in the morning) or until sundown (if they arrived in the afternoon); on a failure, they must depart immediately (see below).

The Power of the Elvenking

If the Player-heroes try to remind Celebril that the city is ruled by the Master of Esgaroth and not by the Elvenking, they are treated as if they failed the Persuasion check, and an angry letter is immediately hand-delivered to the Master of Lake-town, requesting that the companions be punished, or at least fined, for obstructing the work of an official emissary of the Woodland Realm. As a consequence, any companion with a Proficiency Bonus of +4 or less is summoned by the Master to the Town-hall, where they receive a public reprimand — they have Disadvantage on all Audience checks in Esgaroth until the end of the Adventuring phase.

THE GLITTERING GATE

The Glittering Gate is the group of small houses huddled in the westernmost side of the Elven quarter. Painted in bright geometric patterns, they are the workshops of the Dwarven goldsmith and gem-cutters of Lake-town. This is the only place where the trading of gems and gold is allowed by the Master of Esgaroth, and thus where many treasures and precious items change hands and ownership.

Where normally this part of the city is enlivened at any hour of the day by the sounds of dozens of small hammers and chisels, and by the continuous murmuring of the Dwarf-smiths and their customers (mostly Elves), today a more sombre silence reigns, broken only by the incessant drumming of the rain on the low roofs.

The Guardian

Before they can take a guess at the reason for such tranquillity, the companions are hailed from across the street by a stout Dwarf, a guard wearing a heavy coat of mail and a steel helm concealing most of his face, but not his flowing red beard. This is Gylfi, son of Gisli, keeper of the Glittering Gate. Gylfi is used to dealing daily with haughty merchants and their spouses, or with supercilious Elves, and sees the meeting with the companions as a welcome change of pace: he is a former adventurer, and is able to recognise their ilk at a glance.

SILVAN ELF SENTINEL

Medium Elf

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1))

Armour Class 16 (Leather Corslet)
Hit Points 75 (10d8+30)
Speed 30 ft

Skills Athletics +6, Perception +5, Traditions +3
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Sindarin, Westron
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Disabling Strike. By spending a Focus point, the Sentinel can force a target that they has struck to make a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or become Stunned until the end of the Sentinel's next turn.

Focused. The Sentinel has trained for centuries. They have 5 Focus points, which they regain when they finish a short or long rest. The Sentinel can use their bonus action and spend one Focus point on their turn to take the Dash, Disengage, or Dodge action, to make an attack with their great spear, or attempt a Disabling Strike..

Actions

Multiattack: The Sentinel makes two attacks with either their Great Spear or Great Bow.

Great Spear: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12+3) piercing damage.

Great Bow: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft, one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage

Reactions

Parry. The Sentinel adds 3 to their AC against one melee attack that would hit them. To do so, the Sentinel must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

After their experience with the Elven sentinels, the companions will probably welcome meeting someone like Gylfi. Forthright and talkative, the Dwarf is not only genuinely friendly, but he also possesses some potentially useful information.

If informed of Orsmid's disappearance, Gylfi is saddened, as he knew the old craftsman from his business visits to the Elven quarter. Unfortunately, he doesn't know of any enemies that the smith might have made.

If the subject of precious stones is raised, Gylfi will confirm that a rumour shared by all the jewel-smiths of the Glittering Gate tells of an alarming number of burglaries in the last three months, all concerning gems. Many conjectures have been made, and more curses have been uttered by every Dwarf in Lake-town, but to no avail: the precious stones seem to have disappeared. Several letters of aggravation have been delivered to the Master of Esgaroth, and word has it that the Dwarves of the Glittering Gate are a hair away from invoking the intervention of the King under the Mountain himself. But other Dwarves counsel for patience instead, fearing that the Wood-elves might be involved - after all, who loves gems and precious stones more than the Elvenking?

- Part Six -

Whispers in the Dark

At some point during the adventure the companions will want to talk to Haldis, the fisherwoman. The companions can find her only after a few days into the investigation, on a quay along the Market-pool, mending fishing nets.

Meeting Haldis

Haldis hasn't any important information to share about Orsmid or the Mornamir but she can instead tell them all she knows about the 'Guttermaw' and the 'mud-men' that roam the underside of the city, if the companions are interested. Provided they don't think this is only crazy talk, the companions may find that missing piece of the puzzle that will allow them to solve the situation.

The 'Guttermaw'

Haldis tells a version of the legend darker than the colourful renditions that the companions may have heard about the creature so far. According to the fisherwoman, the monster lurks in the dark waters below the city, feeding on fish and waste, but climbs along the timbers with its powerful short legs when hunger prompts it to search for larger prey. She has never seen it, but she has seen the scratches left by its talons on the timbers, and she has felt its presence under the surface of the lake.

The 'Mud-men'

If the companions show an interest on this matter, Haldis explains that those she calls the 'mud-men' are a gang of thieves roaming the same environment she herself favours: the underside of Lake-town, the watery maze created by the thousands of timbers rising from the surface of the Long Lake. She has given them this name because she has noticed that they mask their countenance, smearing mud across their face and eyes.

Haldis has been observing these mud-men for the last couple of days, moving about the underside of Lake-town. She thinks they are thieves because who else would hide under the town? Considering their movements, they must have built a refuge somewhere under the Town-hall's quarter, where the wealthiest houses rest on the tallest timbers.

If the companions are determined to find these mud-men, Haldis leads them to the Butcher's Quay, where they can use a long ladder to climb down from the 'surface' of the city and into the underside of Lake-town. Then, the fisherwoman wishes the Company good luck with their search, and leaves them to their dark business.

LAKE-TOWN DOWN UNDER

The ladder leads the Company to a platform of wooden boards. From here, a path made of planks nailed to the stoutest timbers enters the dark forest that rises from the waters under the Town-hall quarter. Hundreds of wide stilts emerge from the surface of the lake, made the colour of ink by the everlasting darkness that reigns here.

The maze of twisting ways the companions are following was originally created for the maintenance of the city's underside, and enlarged secretly by thieves and burglars for their own nefarious purposes. Spiders and bugs crawl along the wet surfaces, and a smell of fish and rotten things permeates the air.

Lair of the Mud-men

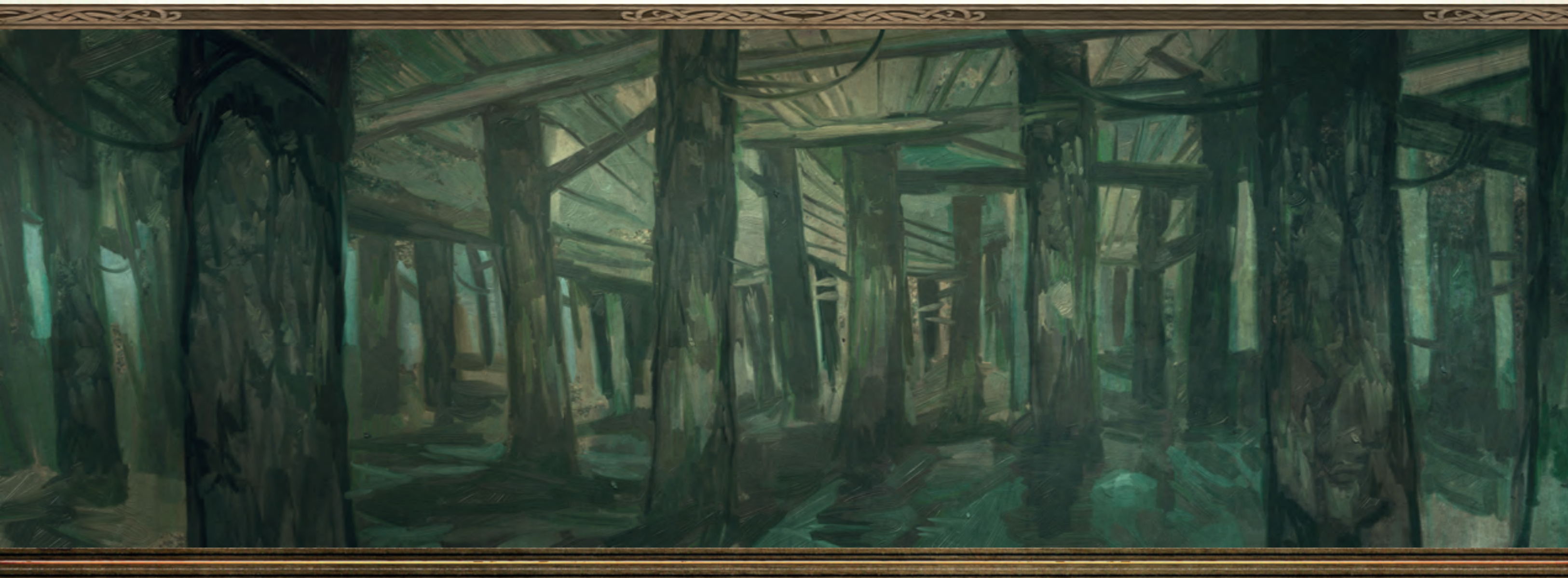
After some time of walking in the dark, the companions see a flickering light: an oil lantern hanging from a hook driven into a stout timber. The sources of light multiply as they get closer, until the companions can make out what seems the reconstruction of an encampment atop the trees of Mirkwood: wooden platforms lie suspended between the stilts sustaining the buildings above, and upon them camp several warriors, clad in the colours of autumn. They are silently sharing a small casket of wine they must have stolen from the Market-pool, and several heaps of loot lie scattered about. The companions can sense many more warriors lurking at the edge of the firelight.

The companions may be surprised to see that the burglarious mud-men are in fact Wood-elves, squatting on flets hanging from the timbers of Lake-town as if they were in the dark depths of their Woodland Realm, but an explanation for their behaviour can be the presence of one individual: Linnon, their chief. He is tall and fair of countenance, but a strange light glows in his gaze, made sinister by the mud-smears on his cheeks and under his eyes.

There are seemingly two paths in front of the Player-heroes: they can reveal themselves to the mud-men and request an audience with their chief, hoping that there is truth to the saying that all Elves are 'Good People', or they may try to sneak around, hoping to find something that will help them puzzle this situation out.

- **Sneaking Around.** The mud-men do not expect an intrusion in their darkened refuge, but it is easy to make noise when walking on wooden planks. The companions must pass several **DC 18 Dexterity (Stealth)** group checks or be heard by the Wood-elves. Scouting the whole encampment requires a total of 3 checks - if the heroes make it, they find the cage where the mud-men are keeping Orsmid (see page 115).

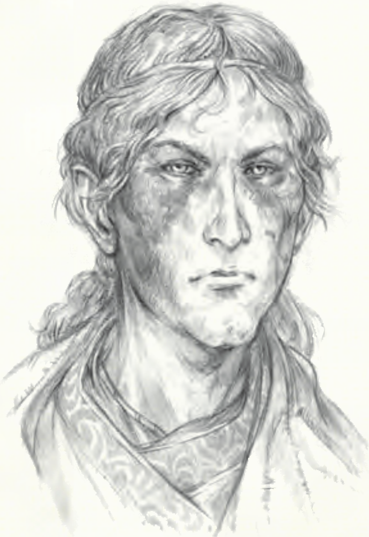
- **Confronting Linnon.** To meet the chief of the mud-men the companions need only reveal themselves. When they do, the Elves react coolly, slowly standing up one by one, leaving bows and spears close to hand among the flets. Then Linnon welcomes them and invites them to join him in his camp.



Linnon, the Renegade

Linnon is a renegade Elf. He once belonged to the Wayward Elves, those of the Fair Folk who choose to enjoy life in Middle-earth to its fullest, while it lasts (see *Rhovanion Region Guide,* page 86). But he eventually found their lifestyle too soft for his adventurous tastes and, according to his version, he 'left'.

In truth, Linnon was expelled from the Woodland Realm when he murdered a group of trespassing Bardings, in an effort to convince his fellows that the weakness of mortals is to blame for the Long Defeat that the Elves are suffering in their struggle against the Enemy. Since that day, Linnon has lived outside the Woodland Realm, recently moving to the underside of Lake-town to initiate his most recent endeavour: to reclaim all the gems and precious stones that once belonged to his own kind and that are now being traded by greedy Men and Dwarves at the Glittering Gate. Linnon and his men are single-handedly responsible for the disappearance of a great deal of precious gems from the houses and storerooms of many a merchant in Lake-town.



Motivation & Expectations

Linnon has been expelled from the Woodland Realm for his violent means: the only thing he values is brute force. He views everyone as enemies and expects the heroes to treat him as a king — apply a -**2** Expectation modifier unless the heroes bow and scrape before him.

Introduction

Linnon demands to know who the companions are and what they are doing here in 'his' dark domain. The speaker for the Company has Disadvantage on the required **Traditions** check.

Interaction

Linnon knows the party's presence must have something to do with the Black Jewel. He knows that Orsmid *used* to possess the gem, and that the heroes seek it. Ultimately, the jewel is all that Linnon cares about, and he is growing restless with the thought that it might somehow fall into the hands of someone other than himself. He will reveal that Orsmid is his prisoner and is willing to talk about the conditions of his release. Though possessed of a keen wit, Linnon is ruthless but, from the point of view of a mortal, quite mad. He will occasionally slip into a bit of a riddle game during the conversation and expect the characters to keep up with him despite his archaic speech mannerisms.

Final Audience Check

The longer the companions speak with Linnon, the more evident the Elf's madness becomes. The Final Audience check must be made with **Riddle**, in order to pick out a way forward between the thorns.

Failure. Linnon is frustrated with the lack of answers coming from the Company. He declares the companions guilty of trespassing. They are escorted by many Mud-men and put into hanging cages, next to the very one occupied by Orsmid.

Old Enemies

If the Player-heroes followed Eutaric during *Part 3: Tales, Secrets and Lies* and the Loremaster feels the need to wrap up that subplot without further complications, perhaps Linnon is in fact the murderer of Eutaric's brother, and Eutaric can show up if needed to help the companions escape in *Part 7: Flotsam and Jetsam.*

Alternatively, if the Company roused him to deep suspicion, it may be Odvarr that shows up, having followed the same clues that the companions did. In this case, he only wants the location of the Mornamir from his old friend. See *Black Treachery* on page 116.

Success by 0–5. Linnon only desires the jewel. If they think to offer it, Linnon agrees to release Orsmid to the companions if they can recover the gem and return it to him. They are imprisoned as above to confer with Orsmid before being later set loose to recover the gem.

Success by 6+. As above, but the companions may substitute any gem worth at least 50g for the Black Jewel to leave with Orsmid and far less trouble.

8 Orsmid

Linnon's men brought a half-drowned Orsmid to him a few days ago. By chance, Linnon discovered who the old man was, and kept him as a prisoner to get hold of the Mornamir. After the meeting with Linnon, the companions will likely find themselves in cages next to that occupied by the old man. The cages hang from a flet built at one of the highest points of the under-town, but they still graze the dark water of the lake. The only light comes from lanterns hanging from timbers above. If the heroes stay here for long, they soon realise that the water is rising as the storm intensifies around them.

Left here to rot, Orsmid is by now a frail and wet shadow of the man he was but a few days ago. A fall, a swim in the river, and rough treatment by the Elves have left him aching and weak. He is disheartened and his courage is failing. When the companions explain who they are and why they have come, Orsmid describes his version of events, including his personal history if necessary.

> *"I fully expect to die in this place. There will be no peace for me. All I have attempted to build will come to naught but rust. At least these fiends will not lay their hands upon the Mornamir."*

What's more, he confides in them that he had the Black Jewel on his person when he fell into the river and later brought to this place. As he was taken into these tunnels, he was able to briefly escape and hide away the jewel in a side passage.

The heroes can attempt to rouse Orsmid out of this dark reverie with a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check. Heroes that think to pass him something to drink or eat gain Advantage on the check. Once they have successfully roused the old man, he will agree to guide them to the jewel, especially if they think to mention Magan's dependence on his recovery.

- Part Seven -
Flotsam and Jetsam

A cage may be enough to hold an old man, but an accomplished group of heroes should have little trouble escaping. Each hero can attempt to open the lock of the cage with a **DC 16 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check; a failure alerts the Elf-guard at the top. Once free however, the hero must contend with the guard, despite not having any weapons!

If the hero can overcome the guard, they can claim the lantern and find the Company's weapons in another nearby flet. A hero made Unconscious by Elf-magic falls into the raging waters below the piers, see *Underwater!* below.

Mud-man

Medium Elf

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

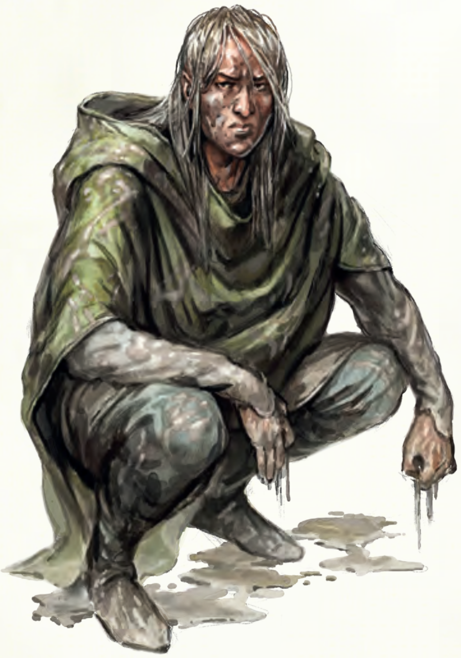
Armour Class 18 (Deadly Elusiveness)
Hit Points 60 (8d8+24)
Speed 30 ft

Skills Acrobatics +6, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6, Survival +3
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Sindarin, Westron
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Deadly Elusiveness. If the Mud-man does not wear any armour, their Armour Class is equal to 10 plus twice their Dexterity modifier.

Actions

Multiattack: The Mud-man makes two attacks with their Poisoned Dagger.
Poisoned Dagger: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage. The target must make a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or become Poisoned until it finishes a short rest.
Enchanted Sleep (1/day). The Mud-man can target a creature within 30 ft and force it to make a **DC 12 Charisma** saving throw or become Unconscious



Black Treachery

If Odvarr has followed the Company to the undertown, he creeps into the flet and knives the Elf-guard in the back. Then he cuts the ropes for any cages holding Player-heroes, causing them to fall into the churning water below. He spares only Orsmid and forces the smith to lead him to the hiding place of the Black Jewel.

Escaping the Cages Underwater

If a companion has not yet escaped from the cage, see *Underwater!* But the fall and the roaring water makes breaking the cage open easier. The hero can make a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check with Advantage. Once free, it takes one round for them to swim to the surface.

Underwater!

Heroes that fall into the water from anywhere in the undercity take 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage each round as long as the storm lasts. The current twists and turns, slamming the companion into the underwater supports that hold the town up. It takes one round for the hero to reach the surface, at which point they can use an action to pull themselves up onto the supports again.

RECOVERING THE MORNAMIR

Once the heroes have escaped (or if they've been let out as part of an agreement to turn to Black Jewel over to Linnon) they must follow Orsmid to the side passage where he concealed his prize.

Unfortunately, the last few hours have seen the rainstorm above reach the peak of its strength, and waves are hitting the stilts of Lake-town in fury. The heroes must navigate their way against strong blowing winds, always risking a fall into the raging waters. Companions must succeed at a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check or gain a level of Exhaustion as they stumble from one storm-lashed support to another. If they failed to raise Orsmid's spirits in the pit, the Loremaster may opt to make them Miserable instead.

Once Orsmid gets them to the spot he was looking for, matters are only worse. Alas for the companions, certain rumours in Lake-town have their basis in truth...

The Monster

The 'Guttermaw' is no legend, but some bygone breed of serpent left to bloat deep beneath the earth where rivers are born. An ancient creature with a long, serpentine body, and a massive head with small eyes near the end of its pointed snout, it is a fearful monster, whose strange senses have perceived the presence of an unusual treasure like the Mornamir. The 'Guttermaw' has long feasted in the cold waters deep beneath the Long Lake, for long years feeding only on fish and such prey as it could catch along the lake's edge. With the rebuilding of Lake-town, though, it began feeding upon the wayward miscreants of the city.

Just as the hero in the passage is grasping the jewel, the Guttermaw strikes. The fish-like monster rises out of the water snapping at the companions with its powerful jaws. The companions must fight on the narrow beams of the under-city, it's considered difficult terrain and a hero knocked Prone is likely to fall into the water (see *Underwater!*, above).

THE GUTTERMAW

Huge Monstrosity

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Armour Class 19 (Natural Armour)
Hit Points 193 (17d12+85)
Speed 30 ft, swim 60 ft.

Damage Resistances non-magical bludgeoning and piercing (see below)
Skills Athletics +10, Stealth +11, Survival +7
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages None
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Horrible Strength. If the Guttermaw makes a successful melee attack, it may use its bonus action to cause extra damage equal to its Strength modifier (+6) to the target.
Scaly Hide. The Guttermaw is resistant to non-magical bludgeoning and piercing damage.
Water Dweller (Recharge 5-6). As a bonus action, if the Guttermaw can gain half-cover from a scenery feature, even if it would not normally provide it.

Actions

Iron Jaws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft, one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8+7) piercing damage.
Seize Victim. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d12+6) bludgeoning damage. The target becomes Grappled (escape DC 20) and is held underwater and begins to suffocate. The Guttermaw can spend its action to cause 12 (1d12+6) bludgeoning damage to the Grappled creature.

Legendary Actions

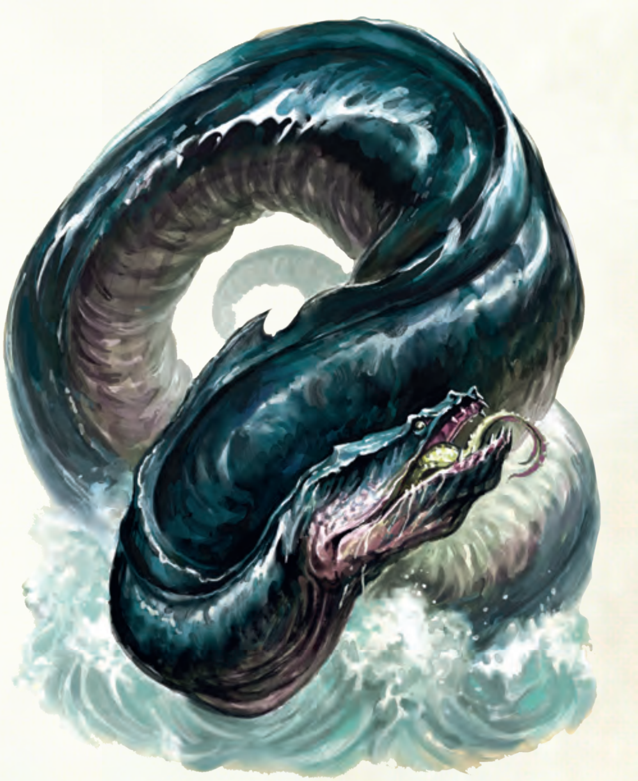
The Guttermaw has 2 Legendary actions, given below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. At the start of its turn it regains any spent Legendary actions.

Bite. The Guttermaw attacks with its **Iron Jaws.**
Constrict. The Guttermaw causes 12 (1d12+6) bludgeoning damage to a Grappled creature.

The Mornamir

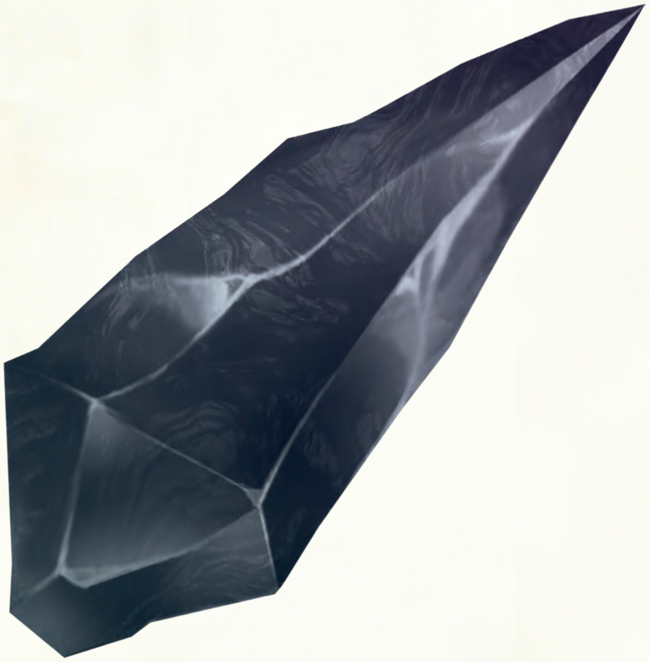
The Black Jewel that so many people seek is an oblong gem about 6 inches long with many facets running tip-to-tip. One end is sharply pointed. It is an unusual dark silvery grey colour, and if one stares into its depths, it flickers with a pale fire. Crafted by the Elves in an earlier age of the world, the exact nature and history of the Mornamir is left for the Loremaster to decide. It may carry a curse of some kind, but it is certainly not tainted by Shadow; quite the contrary. If a character thinks to wield the jewel as a weapon, it should be treated as a dagger that does magical damage. When it strikes a creature of Shadow, a bright flash shines forth like a star. A hero can then spend Inspiration to add 1d12 radiant damage to the attack.

If the characters have reached an agreement with Linnon to turn over the Black Jewel, then the following sections need to be adjusted accordingly. The statue will never truly be complete as intended if Linnon ends up with the jewel.



The Flight Up to Lake-town

Once they have recovered the Black Jewel, the heroes will likely need to get back to Lake-town as quickly as possible. The piercing screams of the monster will have alerted the Silvan Elves to the Company's escape, and they will soon be on their heels.



In order to have any chance at all, the heroes must first find their way out of the dark passageways. One or more of the characters must make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** check to find their way out to the surface. A failure should result in a confrontation with a few Mud-men.

A natural 1 means that a large force of Mud-men corner the Company in a dead-end passage. Their only escape option could be to dive into the lake and swim among the raging waves.

When the Company makes it back above, they find the streets of Lake-town taking a pounding from rain, along with the crashing thunder and lightning of a powerful storm.

- Epilogue -

The next morning sees the Town Watch arrive to investigate the previous night's violence. How they react will largely depend on the heroes' behaviour throughout the adventure, along with the Company's reputation, and the current status of Odvarr and Orsmid. The Master of Esgaroth will undoubtedly get involved and the characters will have to make their case one way or another. Do they reveal the existence of Elven robbers beneath Lake-town? The crafty Mud-men might hide elsewhere if the Town Watch starts patrolling the under-town. Will they accuse the master of the Guild of Artisans of trying to murder them? Odvarr can easily find someone willing to say that he was at the guild house all night. Do they reveal the provenance of the Black Jewel if they know it? Orsmid might admit the theft, especially if it seems that it will calm things down.

What about Linnon? And there's a matter of a hoard of stolen gems somewhere beneath the Town-hall quarter waiting to be recovered. The Elves have a long memory, and it might be necessary to appease Celebril or pay restitution before the Mornamir can adorn the statue of Bard. These topics can provide opportunity for the Loremaster to create additional adventures.

The Completion of the Statue

One way or another, at the end of the summer, the statue of Bard is finished. It has been many lifetimes of Men since the North has seen such a work completed and the hearts of the citizens are brightened by it. If the companions are present at the dedication ceremony, they may reduce their temporary Shadow by 1 point. If they are there as official companions to Orsmid and Magan, they may instead reduce Shadow by 3 points. Note that the statue will count as completed only if the Mornamir is attached to it.

-SHADOWS- IN THE NORTH

FOR HEROES OF LEVEL 11 OR HIGHER

- **When**: This adventure occurs early in 2962, in the last days of winter.
- **Where:** The Company begins in Dale, having been summoned by Balin. But desperate need will send them to the Mountains of Mirkwood, back to Dale, and eventually to the heart of Erebor.
- **What:** The characters are asked to investigate dangers gathering outside the city but then find more enemies within the walls of Dale.
- **Why:** The companions are among the people who saw the craftsman before the disappearance. Magan knows of their deeds, and she is confident they will be able to find Orsmid.
- **Who:** Many of the Company's foes and allies will play a part in this adventure, each revealing their true colours before the end.
- **Themes**: Foiled by the heroes at every turn, Morlach the Nazgûl tricks the Company into deadly danger and then attempts to have them executed. The companions must put their trust in their true friends and save both kingdoms.

ADVENTURING PHASE

This adventure is divided into seven parts, from the Company meeting with Balin to the Ringwraith's attack on Erebor.

PART ONE - EXPECTED VISITORS

The Company meets Balin again and learns of a threat to both Dale and Erebor. Observant companions may realise that Gandalf has taken notice of these activities as well.

PART TWO - THE VALE OF BONES

Deep within the Netherwood, a foe lies in wait. But the companions may find themselves hard pressed to bring news of this evil back to Dale.

PART THREE - A WARM WELCOME

Once they have returned to Dale, the Company finds that they — and Balin — are under arrest on false charges. Proving their own innocence is difficult and the king will pass judgement.

PART FOUR - THE CITY OF BELLS

The companions must go into hiding within Dale. They will now need every friend that they have made in their course of their adventures to prevent disaster!

PART FIVE - INSIDE INFORMATION

A meeting will be held in depths of Erebor that will determine the fate of the North for many years to come. The companions must be present, no matter if the entire Mountain stands in their way!

PART SIX - THE CONCERT OF KINGS

King Bard and King Dáin meet and the decisions made here will echo across the land. But they are not alone... friend and foe have come to the Mountain and the assault by the Nazgûl begins.

PART SEVEN - FLIGHT INTO THE MOUNTAIN

The Arkenstone is in danger, and the Company has one final chance to defeat the Sorcerer of Forod and ruin the Nazgûl's plans.

EPILOGUE

Hopefully, the Arkenstone has been saved and the peace between the Mountain and the City renewed. Otherwise, dark days await the North.

- PART ONE - EXPECTED VISITORS

Balin has sent word to the Company that he needs to speak with them on an urgent matter. He may send a raven to find them, or use one of the marvellous mechanical birds of his young friend, Thrun. It is best that the companions are reminded of Thrun, for he will soon play a part in this tale.

BALIN'S HOUSE

Spring has not quite yet come to the city — it is a week or two away, and the town seems to be in the melancholy grip of winter still. In the evening glow, the streets of Dale seem especially sickly. The happiness of Dragontide and celebration of the anniversary and the raising of the statue seem already a fading and hollow memory. No one has seen King Bard in public in long weeks. Stray dogs pick through midden heaps on the street corners. The brightly-coloured paving in the main streets is lifting in places. On other streets, sections of once brightly-coloured cobblestones appear to have been entirely taken away. Who knows to what end?

The Dwarf ambassador is not immune to the changing mood in Dale. He has taken to moving his quarters on a regular basis to avoid trouble. Currently he resides in a tiny house between two boarded-up shops in the Quays.

Balin opens his small green door and blinks his tired eyes as the golden light of the waning sun falls on his face. *'Here finally? Come in! Come in! Quickly now...'* He ushers the heroes into his small quarters. But he is not without courtesy – if the companions introduce any new members to him, he will bow low to the newcomers, stating *'Balin, son of Fundin, at your service.'* He trusts that the Company has chosen wisely but will likely speak foremost to those he has met before.

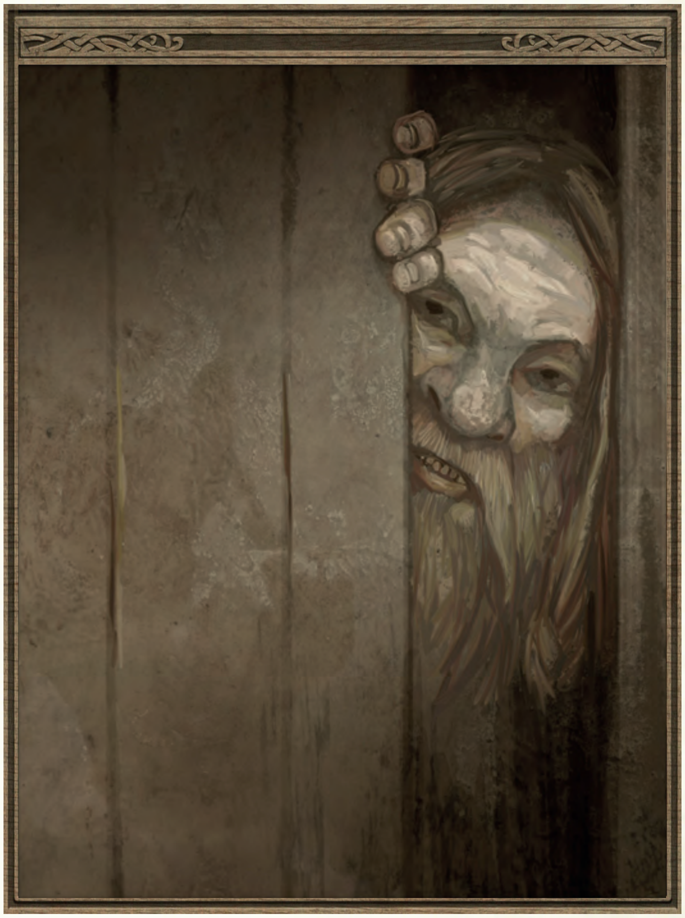
If asked about his change in abode he will gruffly say he has a restless heart, and cannot settle in one place too long after years wandering. The truth is – and something of his true frame of mind can be revealed by a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** check – he fears staying in one place too long in the current climate of unrest. His work in attempting to keep the peace between the cities has made him ever more enemies.

The Mark of the Wandering Wizard

A hero that is Keen-eyed or Suspicious (or perhaps a Small Hobbit) might chance to notice a strange mark scratched into the paint at the bottom of Balin's door. It is a Gandalf rune, the mark of Gandalf.

If the companions point out the mark on his door, Balin's grim mood will be temporarily lightened. However, the Wizard is not present and Balin will state that 'In the meantime, we must do what we can.'

Balin's home consists of two small rooms, with very little in the way of creature comforts. He offers his bed and a couple of plain wooden chairs to the Company to be seated, while he brings some small mugs of beer for everyone to drink.



He seems distracted and mutters to himself while he gathers mugs. He seems to have developed the habit of touching his belt with his right hand every few minutes, as if reaching for his sword. He speaks:

'Well now, no sense in beating about the bush, and I fear the hour grows late. I have news relating to our misfortunes of the last few years. I am now certain that there is evil at work in the city of Dale, and worse in the city of Erebor.'

Balin sits with a sigh and continues:

'Yes. I am afraid that our misfortunes of the last few years are not the natural waxing and waning in the friendship of kings. Nor do I believe that there is simply some power struggle for the throne of Dale going on. Something darker is afoot, and I can finally prove it.'

'I have sent word to my old friend, the Wizard Gandalf. If any will be able to help us now it is he. But I have not heard back from him yet, and I fear my messages will go unanswered. He is a wanderer and often cannot be found when he is most needed.'

When asked about the 'proofs' he is certain to have uncovered, Balin adds:

'I am sure you know that not all the Orcs we fought at the Battle of Five Armies were slain. Many of that craven lot fled the field to hide in secret holds in the mountains, or were scattered east, in the wilderness far from Dale. This never troubled us much – Goblins and their ilk are a fact of life, and while we slay them wherever we can, I fear we will never be entirely rid of them.'

'But recently word has come to Erebor of a great army, massing near to our eastern borders with the intent to strike. The Orc army seems to be hiding in the forest known as the Netherwood, to the south of the Iron Hills, to deceive us about their number. Many scouts have found sign of their passing, converging on this spot. What's more is there are tales of some dark power, something greater than a stray Orc warlord that is gathering this army, with the intent to destroy both kingdoms.'

'I have attempted to alert the notables of Dale to this alarming news, but to no avail. Indeed Lord Hakon seems careless of the threat, and I have been unable to reach King Bard himself. He spends many long hours alone in his chambers now, and Jofur will not spare any men. King Dáin seems equally untroubled, and leans too heavily on the wisdom of simply closing our gates.'

'As for our current defences, I deem that we are weak now. I fear that we are in no state to repel an assault, should this Orc host reveal itself to be more than a phantom of fear. And so I need to ask you a favour, and it will risk life and limb.'

'Go east and spy out the enemy's encampment. Do what you can to interfere with any assembling of Goblins, though I fear you may find more than just Orcs out there. Here is a map that shows my best guess of where the Enemy is massing. Be careful! And report back to me, and only me, when you have done all you can!'

A DECEIVING PLOT

What Balin does not know is that the tale of the army has been fed to him by the dark forces that seek to ruin both Dale and Erebor. It is a trap. So troubled is Balin by the fortunes of the cities that he has been fooled – Morlach dearly wishes him to send the Company, since they have foiled so many of his plans.

Morlach hopes the heroes will meet their doom there, or at least allow the Nazgûl to move more openly. The folk of Dale and Erebor will soon have more troubles to worry about, for the Sorcerer of Forod aims to goad the Mountain to wage war upon the Bardings!

But for now, the heroes know nothing other than that their old friend Balin has asked them to spy out the Enemy and report back. He has little in the way of treasure to offer mercenary members of the Company, but he promises to see them well-rewarded once Dáin comes to his senses.

– PART TWO –
THE VALE OF BONES

The Company prepares to travel to a forest of ill-omen in order to prove that an army gathers in hiding to assault Dale. The Player-heroes should gather whatever provisions they need, and then set about their destination. Balin provides the companions with a map, showing the preferred route to reach the Netherwood (see the illustration of Balin's on page 122).

Then, the Dwarf urges discretion. *'Go out through the Ravensgate to the north. Only when you are beyond the sight of the bell towers of Dale should you turn to the southeast.'*

The Upper Marches

The map leads the Company southeast across the Upper Marches. The hilly land is still in the grip of winter and the companions are unlikely to encounter any farmers or traders, especially if they stick to less frequented trails. The heroes will spend about ten days crossing the Upper Marches. This leg of the journey has a Peril Rating of 2 and the companions will have 1d2 Journey Events. Some suggested events follow.

Hidden Holes (the Scout)

Voles, rabbits, shrews, badgers, and more dig burrows in which to winter. A misplaced step at the entrance to one of these holes can mean a tumble, twisted ankle, or worse. The Scout must make a successful **Investigation** check or find themselves hurt by a sudden fall. A failure means that the companion takes 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage or, if the Scout rolls a natural 1, a level of Exhaustion instead.

The Howling in the Night (the Look-out)

In the dead of night the air is split by the sounds of raucous howls. The Devourer did not come south alone, and the starving Wolves of the Waste (see overleaf) can no longer wait to feast on Manflesh. As they draw closer to the Company's camp, their bone-chilling howls can terrify even the most hardened hero. The Look-out must make an **Perception** check. On a success, the companions have enough time to gather up enough torches to keep the wolves at bay for now. If the Scout fails, the wolves attack. There are two wolves for each companion, or more if you'd like the heroes to face a stiffer challenge.

Gathering Supplies and Rumours

Setting up for their journey, the companions will find that the stores of Dale are not as they once were, and the shopkeepers and outfitters are less than helpful to any they consider a stranger (and all Dwarves, even those made thegn by King Bard himself, are strangers now). A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that folk are more scared than suspicious.

Bard has not been seen in public for months and rumours of his death are on every corner. Wagging tongues say that Dáin will take the throne of Dale as well. After all, what claim did he have on Erebor! He just claimed it during the war. He is an ambitious Dwarf!

Others say that Thegn Jofur rules the palace now and is king in all but name. He is an extremely stern ruler, at least to judge by the increasing number of guard patrols. What will become of the once jolly City of Bells?

9 The Nether Marches

The heroes leave the hilly lands of the Upper Marches behind, continuing on towards the Netherwood. It takes four more days to reach the outskirts of the forest and they have one more Journey Event (Peril Rating 1).

Cold Wind From the East (All Companions)

As the companions make ready to camp one night, a fierce wind begins to blow from the East. Its fingers seem to get everywhere. It lifts up tents, blows out campfires, and reaches into the warmest of winter clothing to bring a chill to the heart. Each hero must make a **Survival** check, gaining a level of Exhaustion on a failure or two levels with a natural 1.

Stolen Game (Hunters)

One of the Hunters has brought down some game, only to have it stolen by another predator of the Nether Marches – a long-eared fox or a falcon, perhaps. The Hunter must make a **Survival** check, becoming Miserable for the rest of the journey on a failure.

11 Into The Netherwood

After days in the high grass, the companions come in sight of the Netherwood. The ancient stretch of woodland is a dark patch rising from the plains, the surviving fragment of a greater forest that the Dwarves of the Iron Hills diminished to feed their hungry furnaces. The remaining trees stand tall and close together, as if preparing for a desperate last stand.

Balin's map indicates a place where his agents spied a trail-head leading into the dark forest. It's a lonesome hill, rising a mile from the western eaves of the forest. From there, the companions head towards the forest, looking for the Orc camp.

Once inside the woods, the heroes struggle to find a passage among the tightly-packed trees. Fallen leaves gather in great drifts against the rills of the land, obscuring pits that twist ankles and sharp ridges that stub toes. After a few hours of toilsome progress, the Company encounters a dry stream bed. Skeletal, dead branches crunch underfoot, and sudden bursts of wind lift dust and dirt in great choking clouds. Eventually, the dry riverway enters a steep valley descending towards the shadowy heart of the forest – the Company has found the Vale of Bones!

Wolf of the Waste

Large Monstrosity (Warg-kind)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Armour Class 14
Hit Points 57 (6d10+24)
Speed 40 ft

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Wargspeech
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Fear of Fire. The Wolf is fearful of fire. If a torch or other flame comes within 10 feet of it, the Wolf suffers Disadvantage on its attack rolls. In addition, the Wolf is not able to use its Pack Tactics trait.

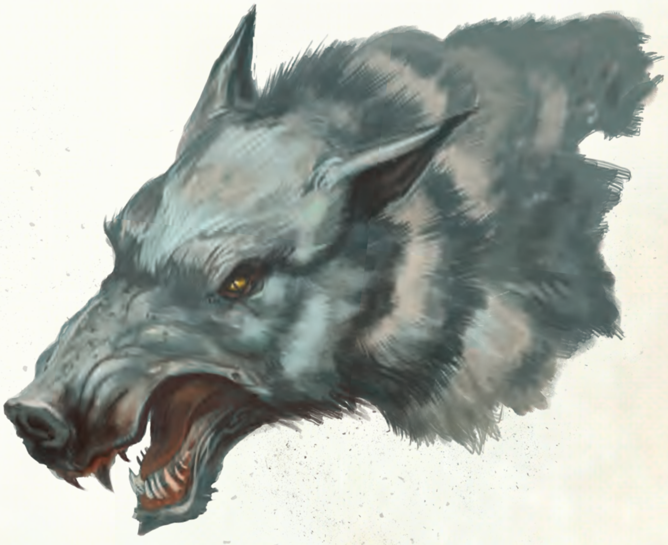
Pack Tactics. The Wolf has Advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the Wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't Incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. The Wolf makes two attacks: one bite and one claw attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must make a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw or be knocked prone.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12+4) slashing damage.



The Descent

Deep down in the vale, the companions can see tiny flickering lights: torches, perhaps campfires. The safest way to descend towards the lights is to follow the dry stream's course. Alternatively, the heroes can climb down along the rocky sides of the dale.

- Heroes that follow the stream bed must pass a single **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** check to keep their feet.
- Heroes that prefer to climb down along the sheer sides of the valley must make a series of four **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** checks instead, descending safely for a measure on each success. If the Company reaches the bottom of the valley by climbing down, they find another entrance to the *Dark Passages* (see page 126).

Failing an **Athletics** check causes the companion to slip and slide down for several yards, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage. Rolling a natural 1 means the hero falls for the remaining distance (20 feet for every check remaining).

Bones and Curses

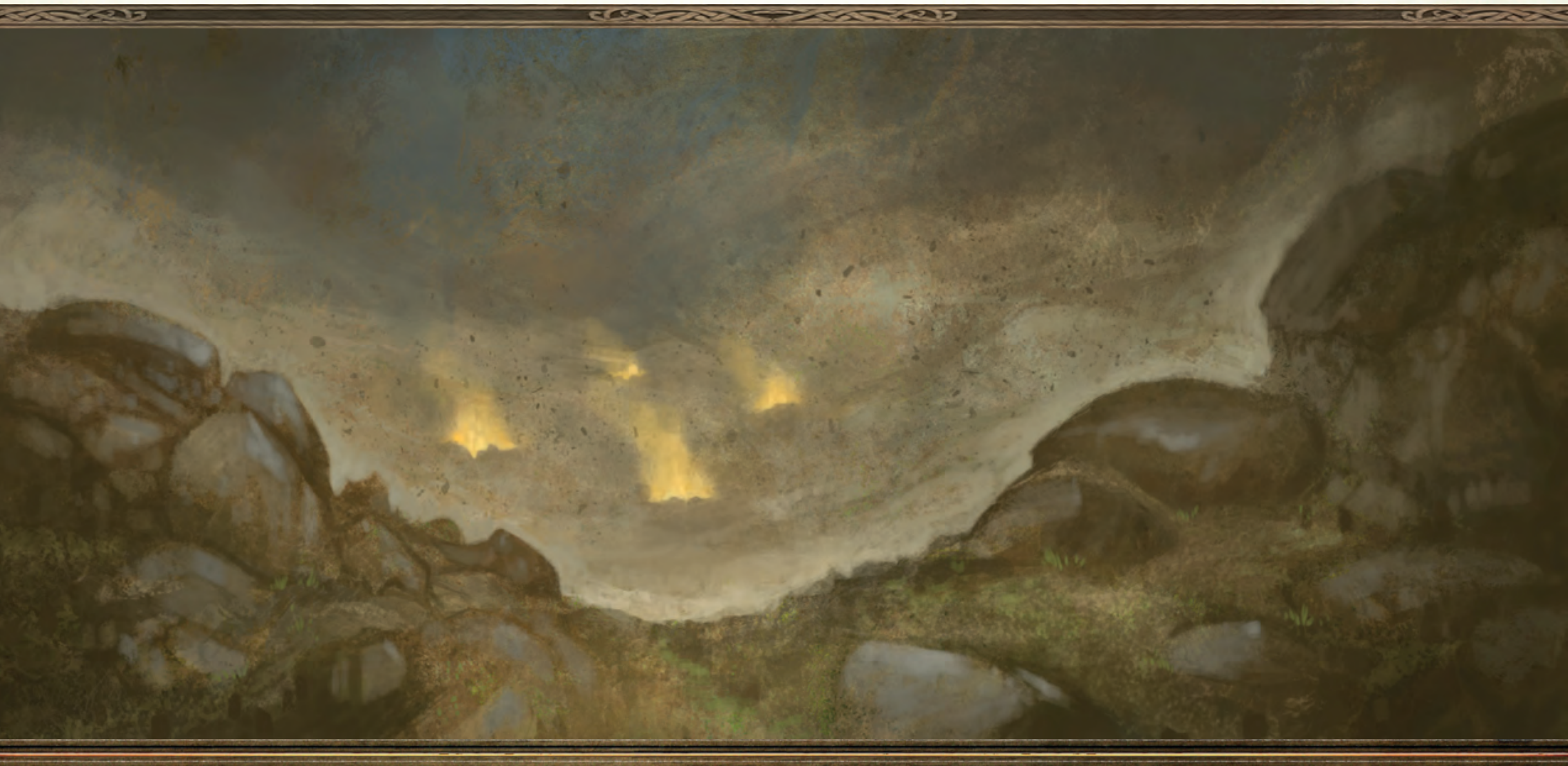
At the bottom of the climb the dale widens into a roughly circular opening, measuring several hundreds of yards across. The overhanging walls are a hundred feet tall, filling the area with darkness. Huge rocks, piles of deadwood, and assorted debris fallen from above clutter the terrain, turning it into a maze.

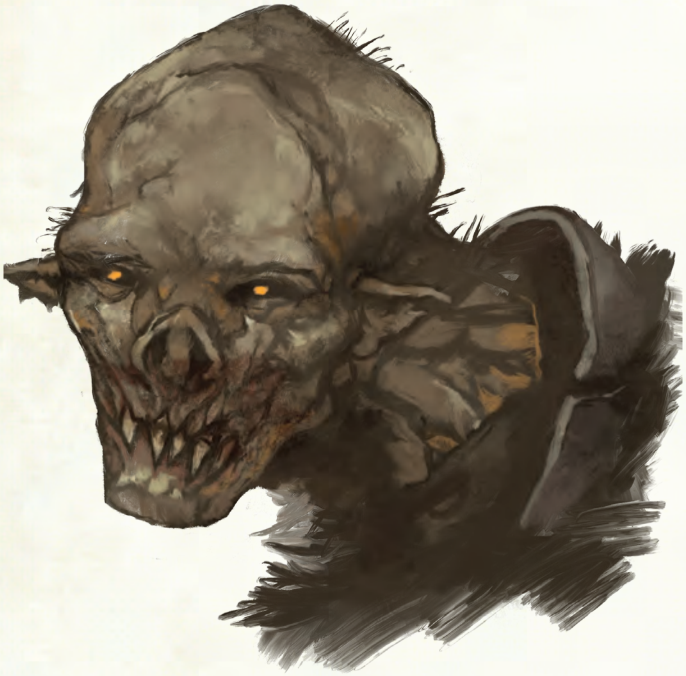
But what alarms the heroes the most is the almost overpowering stench of rotting flesh, Goblin-filth, and animal reek: the Vale of Bones is a blighted place, and the companions must all pass a Corruption check (**DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw) each day, or gain 1 point of Shadow.

The companions can now explore the Vale of Bones, and may encounter any of the locations described below, before they reach the lair of the Devourer, at the Loremaster's discretion:

The Goblin Camp

Companions that choose to investigate the faint lights spied from above will quickly realise that the vale is not the camp of some great army waiting to sack Dale. Instead, they find a mostly empty encampment, inhabited only by a few dozens emaciated Goblins wandering in small groups among poorly flickering heaps of sticks and burning torches. The Goblins shiver and bicker in the dark, while attending to the cooking of meagre meals, like a single skewered rat, or a pot of watery soup of roots and other, less identifiable ingredients. No one is watching for intruders.





Ravenous Goblin

Small humanoid (Orc-kind)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Armour Class 14
Hit Points 3 (1d6)
Speed 30 ft

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 14
Languages Orcish, Westron
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Stealthy. The Goblin may use its bonus action each round to Hide

Actions

Jagged Knife. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Reactions

Biter. When struck, the Goblin may use its reaction to make a bite attack: +1 to hit, reach 5 ft, 5 (2d4) slashing damage.

Stealthy heroes approaching any one of the small gatherings will overhear the Goblins make bitter remarks about their current poor state and fortune:

'He'll eat us soon enough. We need to leave here! I keep telling you!'

'No no no that's not right! He's been promised a meal of Man-flesh! He won't eat us if we do as we're told!'

'He will so eat us! He's always hungry! He ate Gorbag and Uzbug and Burritz and Nashog and all the others! He ate the bats! And we was supposed to be friends with them!'

'Trust me! I know what I 'eard. The spook promised him Man-flesh!'

'Urgh that spook! What's he want with us, I wonder?'

'Shut up, you! You're talking about things beyond your station! Is that rat done yet?'

'I'm so hungry!'

'Well you're only skinny and little! Imagine how hungry he gets! He's huge! With only Goblins to eat!'

'When we ran away, did you reckon he'd eat so many of us?'

'Shut up! This rat's as done as it's ever gonna be!'

There are several other fires scattered amongst the huge boulders that litter the gorge floor. The Company will hear similar conversations at all of them – the theme is always food and hunger, and how to avoid being eaten. At one fire the Company find a Ravenous Goblin passed out from hunger, while his fellow makes preparations to skin and eat him, muttering all the while about *'doin' it quick so the master doesn't gobble us both up first'*.

Huge Dead Wings

The Company stumbles across a pile of what at first appears to be great sheets of dusty leather piled up with old bones. Closer inspection reveals these are the desiccated remains of a Giant Bat's wings. There is no sign of a torso, legs, or head. If they really wish to investigate, there are the remains of three Giant Bats here. Some of the wing bones have been crushed with what seems an enormous force.

Dark Passages

Heroes who creep close to the cliff walls along the dry stream might find their way into one of the underground passageways that riddle the walls of the vale. It is pitch black in these narrow tunnels, and the companions might be surprised by hungry Goblins at any moment. However, if a hero can make either a **DC 15 Intelligence** (**Investigation** or **Riddle**) check, the Company can find a safe way forward and upward, until they reach a crack in the rock walls of the passage, opening above the Goblin Camp. If they manage to do this, the heroes can hear the conversations of the ravenous Goblins from their hidden position, without risking discovery.

But there is a price to be paid for this good fortune — if they press on beyond the opening, when the heroes reach the far end of the vale, the rocky floor suddenly gives way and they tumble into the chamber of the Devourer! (See *An Ancient Enemy*, below).

The Skull Piles

As they proceed towards the opposite end of the vale, beyond the Goblin Camp, the companions come to realise they are walking on bones. The misshapen skulls of Goblins, their ribs, and thigh bones cover the floor. There is no army here, for this is a charnel house. Dried up sword belts, the tattered remains of Orc-mail, and broken weapons jut out as floating debris in a sea of bleached bones. The darkness beyond torch or lantern light is now absolute, and the gorge walls close in tighter as the Company pick their way through the bones toward the back of the defile.

AN ANCIENT ENEMY

Once the heroes reach the far end of the vale, suddenly and seemingly from all around comes a rasping voice, gravelly and arid.

'So! You come as I was told you would. Good. Too long has it been since I ate better than Goblin. Man-flesh is better! Come close... Let me smell you before I gobble you up!'

If the Company have any way to make light, now is the time to risk it: if they illuminate the chamber they will see a horrific sight. A huge, half-starved, albino Wolf-thing with crooked hind legs lies at the end of the valley.

The entire body of this huge and disgusting beast bears the marks of ancient injuries, so much that the thing could be mistaken for a carcass if it wasn't for the glint in its small, predatory eyes.

It slowly raises itself up, and its fur hangs in tatters. Great bald patches run across its bony head. Its mouth is stained with old blood. The stench is almost unbearable. Huge black flies rise lazily into the air from their nests in its stinking pelt.

'They call me the Devourer now, for I have eaten all my servants. Even those who served me well, even those who carried me here from the battlefield. And now I will eat you, and the master will mend my legs and I will return to Dale and the Mountain and finish what we began!'

'The Nazgûl will have the jewel of the Dwarves that the Dark Lord wants and the Mountain will fall. The bell towers will be pulled down, and all the Goblins and Bats and Wolves from miles around will return to feast! I will grow fat on the flesh of Men and Dwarves! So is it promised and so shall it be! Just as you were promised to me, fools...'

'Die now, dinner!'

The Devourer lunges forward to attack.

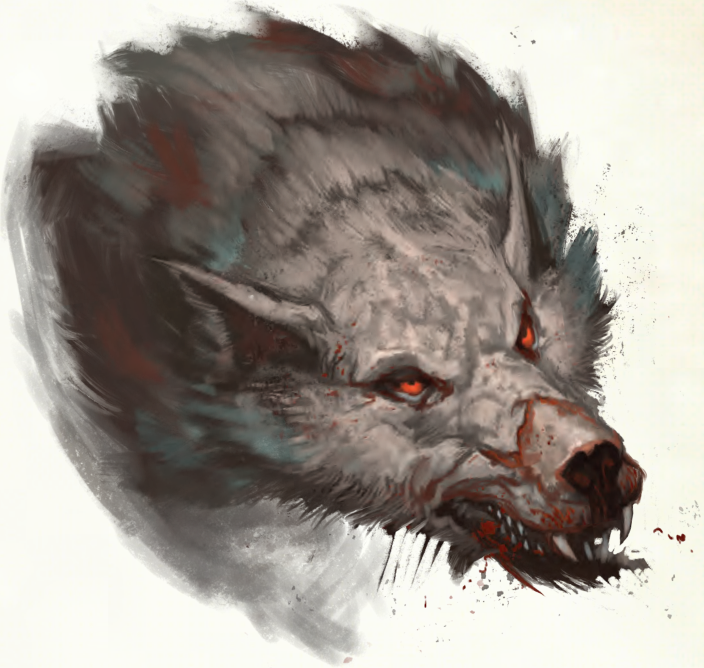
Fight or Be Eaten

The companions have fallen into a trap, and must now defeat the monster, or die trying. The battle they are about to fight is made more challenging by the unique features of its terrain, but they might be able to exploit the weakness of the creature that is trying to eat them:

- **Minions:** The Devourer is joined by two Ravenous Goblins for each hero (or more, if the Company is especially effective in battle).

- **The Darkness:** The darkness of the Vale of Bones is unnaturally deep. All companions, even Elves and Dwarves, have Disadvantage on attack rolls unless they wield a torch. Heroes who can provide magical light can negate this effect. The Devourer and the Goblins are not affected by the darkness.

- **The Footing:** The floor of the area is strewn with bones of all sizes, making it hard to move about without risking to trip and fall: the entire area is considered difficult terrain. The Devourer and his minions do not suffer penalties due to the footing, being well used to the environment of the vale.



A Wizard Unlooked For

At some point during the fight (when the Loremaster deems it most appropriate), Gandalf and Balin arrive to help the companions: the two left Erebor some time after the heroes, having realised they sent the Company right into a trap, and the Grey Wizard has employed every trick up his sleeve to speed up their pursuit.

So, just as things seem the most desperate, a bright white light shines out, illuminating the horror that is the Devourer and its blighted lair. The monster is Stunned and Blinded for a round, and a booming voice is heard encouraging the companions on. *"Strike now while it is weakened! Slay the beast!"*.

The Devourer

Huge Fiend

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	18 (+4)	28 (+9)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0

Armour Class 14
Hit Points 186 (12d12+108)
Speed 10 ft

Skills Perception +6
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing
Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 16
Languages Wargspeech, Common
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Fell Spirit. The Devourer can use a bonus action to gain 10 (3d6) temporary hit points.
Horrible Strength. If the Devourer makes a successful melee attack, it may use its bonus action to cause additional damage equal to its Strength modifier (+7) to the target.
Pack Tactics. The Devourer has Advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the its allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't Incapacitated.
Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the Devourer must succeed on a **DC 17 Constitution** saving throw or be Poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a success, the creature is immune to the Devourer's Stench for 1 hour.

Actions

Multiattack. The Devourer makes three attacks: one bite and two claw attacks.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft, one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6+7) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must make a **DC 17 Strength** saving throw or be knocked prone.
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft, one target. *Hit:* 13 (1d12+7) slashing damage

Legendary Actions

The Devourer has 2 Legendary actions, given below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. At the start of its turn it regains any spent Legendary actions.

Bite Attack. The Devourer makes a Bite attack.
Move. The Devourer can move up to its speed.

If the Company still fares too badly, Balin will stride intobattle to assist them, screaming the Dwarven battle-cry: *'Baruk Khazâd! Khazâd ai-mênu!.'* See page 24 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*.

After the battle, the Company learn something more of Gandalf's mind. The Wizard is aware that something very wrong is occurring in Dale, and dark forces are at work. He will share this information and is keen to hear anything that the companions learned from the Devourer or the Goblins.

If a companion mentions the rumour of a Nazgûl being involved then he sighs heavily:

'So the Ringwraiths have taken an interest in the North again and dare to move against the kingdoms of Men and Dwarves. But at least we know now... perhaps we can set a trap for them, one to make it many long years before the Dark Lord chances his most powerful servants again.'

Gandalf will confirm the guesses of any companions who venture that the 'jewel of the Dwarves' must be the Arkenstone. *'It is truly the heart of the Mountain, and has a power upon any who look upon it. The theft of the Arkenstone might mean war in the North.'*

After the impromptu council, Gandalf stands up. *'Now all of you must return to Dale. When you arrive there, you will certainly be the target of any secret allies of the Enemy. But it is not quite yet time for open defiance... weather any storm that comes your way, so that you can draw the traitors out into the open. And remember that hope may arrive at the last hour, unlooked for.'*

– PART THREE –
A WARM WELCOME

After uttering his final, mysterious words, the Wizard leaps up on his horse and departs. Balin shrugs.

'Well, there he goes again... we might as well be on our way back to Dale.'

Companions heading west towards Dale soon discover that travelling along a route recently blazed by a Wizard is a good thing: the companions do not encounter any danger on the trip back.

After sometime less than two weeks, the greatest city in the North finally appears on the horizon by the end of the last day, and the heroes can reach the Traders Gate before sundown.

AT THE GATE

As the companions approach the gate, they will notice a larger number of guards than usual. Those who call Dale home recognise that these are Jofur's men, who seem to have now replaced those hired by King Bard at every important post. If the heroes are strangers, Balin notices the change and informs them about it under his breath as the Company draws closer to the checkpoint.

In prior days, such heroes might have easily passed into Dale with either a curt nod or an appreciative wave (depending on the Company's reputation in the city), but now they are stopped at the gate. The guards look over the companions, referring to a folded sheaf of papers again and again. Finally, their leader holds up his hand, and a dozen guards gather close by.

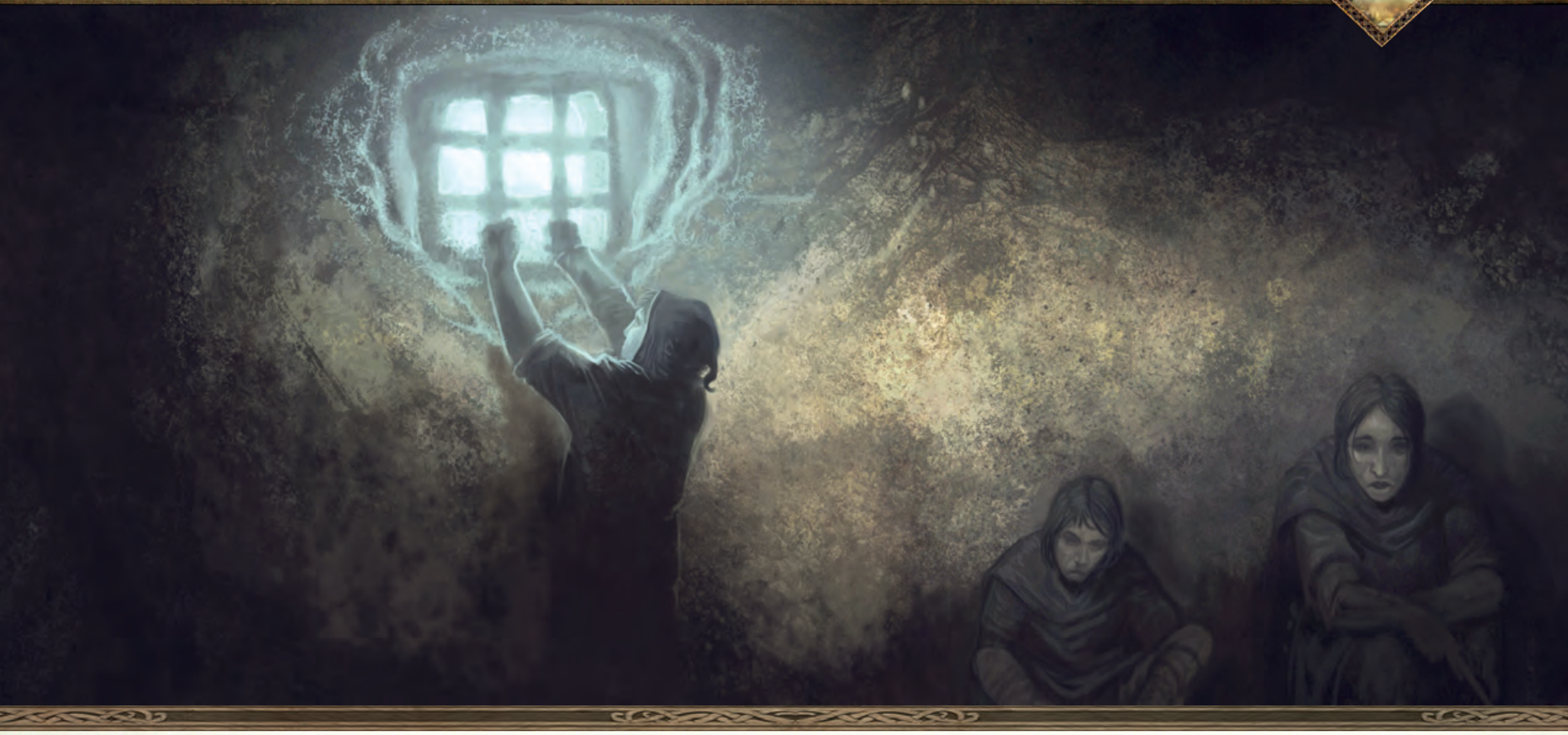
'Balin, son of Fundin, and his known associates,' announces the guard captain, 'You are wanted folk... charged with murder and treason. You must come with us.'

The heroes have only moments to decide what to do. Possibly to their surprise, Balin surrenders at once. He certainly doesn't want to raise a blade against Dalemen; besides, he trusts Gandalf's promises of forthcoming aid. See the appropriate section below to play out the consequences of the Player-heroes' actions.

Surrender

If the Company chooses to give themselves up and be taken into custody, then they are stripped of all weapons and equipment. The guards place heavy iron manacles on each hero, and lead them into the city. The companions spend an uncomfortable night in the cells, given bread and water but nothing else. They rarely see a guard, and when they do, the guards do not speak.

Go ahead to *The Trial,* below.



Flight

If the companions choose to flee, they will be leaving Balin to his fate alone – a Misdeed worth at least 1 Shadow point. They will be pursued, and a bell can be heard ringing from the gatehouse. More guards are coming!

The escape attempt should be run as a prolonged action requiring at least 9 group checks – **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Stealth)** to succeed. Accumulating 3 or more failures means a group of guards (one Guard Commander and at least two City Guards for each hero, see page pages 48-9 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*) has caught up to them.

While the Company is being pursued for evil reasons, the guards themselves are innocent pawns. Slaying any of them, even in the heat of battle, is a Misdeed worth at least 3 Shadow points.

If the Company is overtaken, they are manacled and dragged off in chains to the gaol as above. If they escape, then a mysterious raven will find them the next day. The bird doesn't speak, but delivers a note and flies away without waiting for a response. The note outlines that Balin is on trial for murder and will likely be sentenced to death. It urges the heroes to return to Dale and testify on his behalf. If the Company remains in hiding, another note delivered in the same way reads *'Look for a light on the south wall just before dawn. A friend will be waiting.'* See **Part Four - The City of Bells.**

Fight

Heroes who draw swords immediately against the guards will find themselves in a pitched battle. In addition to the Guard Commander, there are at least two City Guards for each hero. The Guards will use their Silver Whistle feature generously, summoning more aid. Sooner or later, the Company will find themselves outnumbered and possibly outmatched. Hopefully, the Player-heroes will surrender at some point, before they are defeated or before they shed too much innocent blood. Any companions still living (even those Unconscious) will soon find themselves in a cell, as above.

Once the battle-lust subsides, the Loremaster should assign an appropriate amount of Shadow points for the battle. the Company might wish to save Dale from the Enemy, but the guards, while acting under erroneous orders, are not servants of that Enemy. See *The Trial*, next.

THE TRIAL

The next morning, shortly after the dawn light slants into their cells, the Company are taken in chains to the Royal Palace of Dale, to hear the king's justice. At the far end of the main hall, Bard sits on his carved throne, wearing the golden crown of Dale upon a troubled brow. Before him on the raised dais sit Thegn Jofur, Lord Hakon, and an assortment of other minor nobles. A crowd of onlookers has gathered, and more will arrive as word of the accusations spread across town.

Balin is brought in, in heavier chains than the companions. He appears battered and bruised, a grim expression on his face. When the Dwarf takes his place in front of the dais, Thegn Jofur looks briefly at Bard, as if expecting a reaction from him – when he realises that the king is remaining completely motionless, Jofur stands, proceeding to read the charges.

'Balin of Erebor and companions. You are hereby charged under the laws of Dale with the crimes of treason and murder. You have willingly and maliciously committed capricious crimes to the detriment of the reign of King Bard, and have grievously wounded the people of Dale, and grossly endangered them with your perfidy.'

At this point he stops and shuffles his papers. He appears less than comfortable, and indeed gives the companions an uncharacteristic pained look. He pulls himself together, regaining his usual haughty demeanour.

'On behalf and in the name of King Bard I call you to answer the charge. How do you plead?'

Balin simply stands in the dock and looks straight ahead. He will refuse to speak throughout the trial. Lord Hakon stands.

'This is ridiculous. Get on with it Jofur. They are clearly guilty! I have said so on many occasions that these ne'er do wells and vagabonds should be at last cast from our city! We have been too tolerant of their kind! Of Dwarves, of strangers, and wanderers! Of those from the East...'

He looks meaningfully at Jofur at this point.

The Litany of Charges

At this point anything that the companions have done that could be twisted against them should be brought up. Agents of Mordor have spied on them throughout their time in Dale and Erebor. Any time they were in public, or could have been spied upon in secret, there will be evidence against them. The Loremaster should be careful to cite only events that the Nazgûl or their agents could have known about, but be mindful that the Sorcerer's powers are beyond the limits of mortal agents. The charges should be shocking, and obviously a twisting of prior events where the Company was doing good. Inciting their tempers is part of the plan.

Here are some suggestions.

The Silver Needle: The companions may be blamed for the destruction of Kelda's shop or her death. As appropriate, they might be charged with the slaying or beating of Vig, Kasper, Swain, or Longo. If Maugor was seen in public, they will be charged with smuggling an Orc into Dale.

Of Hammers and Anvils: If a fight broke out at the Toy-market, the companions will be charged with inciting a riot. Depending on the outcome of the adventure they might be listed as co-conspirators with the traitorous Lord Gunvar or in league with Dwarf assassins who slew the Barding noble.

To Dungeons Deep: If the Coat of Silver Mail was delivered to the Dwarves (whether by judging it to be their rightful possession or as a diplomatic overture), then the heroes are charged with surrendering the heirloom of King Bard to a foreign power. If the armour went missing in the course of the adventure, they are charged with stealing it.

Sleeping Dragons Lie: If the Company was unable to save Lord Elstan, they will be charged with his disappearance. If Skarf Skulson was slain, they are liable for his murder. And, perhaps worst of all, the companions are charged with conspiring with Dwarves and treating with a Dragon – this last charge causes audible gasps in the courtroom.

Dark Waters: The heroes might be charged with the death of Orsmid or Odvarr, inciting trouble in the Elven Quarter, the theft of the jewels of Esgaroth, vandalizing the very foundations of Lake-town, and harbouring fugitives from the Elvenking. These charges are not brought directly against the Company, but are delivered as examples of their behaviour in the free city of Lake-town.

It is possible that the Company will need to be restrained or subdued if they become too agitated in the face of these fake charges. The guards will only briefly hesitate before clubbing the shackled prisoners on Hakon's nod.

The Conspirators' Masterstroke

Once the heroes' various wrongdoings are recounted before the king, Lord Hakon reveals the main crime with which they are charged:

'I have kept this accusation for last, as I wanted you here assembled to evaluate these criminals for their past misdeeds, before we even considered their most nefarious action. My king, let it be put on record that the accomplices of Balin, son of Fundin, are accused of murdering Thrun, the toy-maker and friend to all, who was discovered near his workshop two mornings ago, strangled to the point of death!'

Thrun's Tragic Termination

The report of Thrun's death has not been exaggerated, unfortunately. In fact, the cunning Dwarf was murdered by an agent of the Sorcerer of Forod, to help Lord Hakon's attempt to stage Balin's treason. A lover of street food and drink, Thrun was easily poisoned by a fake street vendor of ale.

The drug-laced drink asphyxiated him as soon as he returned home, and made him appear as if someone strangled him. Thrun didn't die right away though: the Dwarf managed to return to the streets, only to collapse after a few yards, in front of a small crowd. In his last moments the toy-maker was delirious, and called out to the companions for help several times.

The assembled crowd is now very large, and the voices that are raised in outrage are almost deafening. The guards tighten their ranks to keep a distance from the onlookers and the accused. Lord Hakon continues:

'I am not bringing about these accusations lightly. Thrun himself accused them with his own words several times in his agony, in front of several witnesses.'

'It is now clear from my investigation that these reckless adventurers have been working with the Dwarf, Balin, in an attempt to undermine the crown of Dale, and seize it for Erebor. I recommend that he and his conspirators be either permanently imprisoned or executed forthwith. What say you, Your Highness?'

King Bard remains morose and unresponsive, as if his thoughts are elsewhere. Eventually he sighs and says '*Do you have anything to say in your defence?'*

The Nazgûl Watches

Depending on the disposition of the players, the Loremaster may wish to tip the hand of the Sorcerer now. The heroes might get a sense of chill sweeping through the courtroom, or see a black-clad figure in an open doorway out of the corner of their eyes. For some groups, this may be too much. Others may appreciate a clear clue of what is going on.

Impressing the King

At this point, the companions have little more than their cunning and reputation to use against the charges they face. While the king's judgement may be clouded by his grief, and possibly by the spells of the Ringwraith, he has not completely lost his wits. The entries below include Expectation modifiers for various arguments the Company might put forth.

The Company has a single chance to soften Bard's mood. The heroes have no need of a formal Introduction, but if instead the Company's spokesperson spends that time reminding the assembled nobles and the king of the companions' previous interactions, then the atmosphere of the courtroom might be lightened. The spokesperson must make a **Traditions** check at Disadvantage. On a success, apply a +**1** modifier in addition to setting the difficulty of the Final Audience check.

Now the companions must address or refute the charges that they face. The following are various approaches that they may take.

- The heroes will certainly assert that they were not in Dale at the time of the murder. Unfortunately, their alibi is scoffed at by Lord Hakon and other nobles, and without any witnesses (*'Gandalf the Wizard you say? Well, if he was there where is he now? Gone you say. How convenient!'*) no roll will convince King Bard.

Pursuing this argument provides a **-1** Expectation modifier.

- Similarly, for this scene the truth — that the Nazgûl plot to steal the Arkenstone and bring both Dale and Erebor to ruin — will result in open laughter from Lord Hakon and other nobles. Hakon has already salted this ground, and the truth will not find root here. Insistence on supernatural occurrences will win a **-2** modifier.
- The heroes might wish to call up witnesses, but Lord Hakon refuses to delay the trial to track down *'wandering merchants of the East'* (Katun or any of her followers) or *'itinerant craftspeople'* (Orsmid or Magan). It goes without saying that the testimony of any Dwarf on their behalf is completely unacceptable.
- If the Company names Lord Elstan, then King Bard sits upright. If Elstan survived the Dragon-hunt, he retired to a cottage west of the city. The king motions to one of his guards. The old knight will arrive in a couple of hours. Hopefully the court will not be out of patience with the companions by then. If Lord Elstan can speak on behalf of the Company, his testimony provides a +**3** modifier.
- The best chance that the companions have is to poke holes at the various charges that Hakon has trumped up. Careful questioning might point out inconsistencies, or reveal that Hakon's information must have come from a supernatural source. Depending on how much the heroes can make Lord Hakon stumble, award them a +**1** or +**2** modifier.

Throughout the defence, Balin remains silent. He will not aid the heroes in his or their defence, but neither will he hinder them.

The Judgement

Sooner or later, King Bard will raise his hand. He has heard enough. He stands to proclaim judgement over the defendants. Make a Final Audience check.

Failure. *'You are guilty enough of the various charges assembled against you. Tomorrow morning you will be executed as criminals and traitors.'* See *The Pits*, below.

Success by 0-5. *'I know not the rights and wrongs of men nor women's hearts. But you shall not be slain for these crimes, if indeed crimes they are. I care not.'* He turns to the captain of the guard. *'Take them to the Pits, and let them live there, beyond my sight.'* See *The Pits*, below.

Success by 6+. *'I cannot vouchsafe your guilt in these matters. But I do not doubt that trouble follows in your wake. You are exiled from the city, for the period of one year and one day.'* He turns to the captain of the guard. *'Escort them to the gates and let it be known that they are not allowed to return, upon pain of death.'* See *Exile from Dale*, below.

If King Bard has sentenced Balin and the Company to death, then Lord Hakon smiles smugly. He has done his true master's bidding.

If the Company has been sentenced to the deep cells or exiled from the city, then Hakon is more peevish. He sweeps from the courtroom, declaring *'This is not over!.'*

Thegn Jofur nods meaningfully to the companions as they are escorted away.

Jofur's Plea

It is possible that the Company may choose to adopt the stoic silence of Balin. In this case, Jofur will take a chance and approach them, whispering fiercely:

'Your lives are on the line! You MUST impress the king. You can't get out of this fix, but you must avoid the executioner's sword! Convince him!'

This will give away that Jofur is not the villain of the piece, but now may be the appropriate time to reveal it.

THE PITS

After the trial, guards escort the Company and Balin out of the main hall of the Royal Palace, at spearpoint if necessary. They are swiftly taken out of sight of any onlooker, and led to the Pits, the deepest gaol of Bard's palace. By the number of steps they climb down, the companions have the sense that they are deep underground. Some players may enjoy a game of trying to remember the many twists, turns, and staircases that they take.

Eventually, the companions and their jailers reach a narrow corridor, with doors of wrought iron and heavy wood set into cold stone. One of the doors is unlocked, revealing a dark and cold cell beyond. The Company is pushed in, and the door is closed with an ominous thud and the click of a lock. The guards take Balin further into the dungeon.

Time passes painfully slowly. There is a tiny grille in the thick door that shows a short length of damp, torch-lit corridor and nothing else. Balin is imprisoned elsewhere – even if the heroes call for him, there is no response. There is a steady dripping of water, and the occasional drifting, distant sound of the guards making merry somewhere out of sight.

Escape?

Some time in the bitter watches of the night, Thegn Jofur appears at the door to their cell. He looks extremely nervous as he shows them the key through the door, to make clear his intention and prevent them from attacking him as soon as he opens the cell.

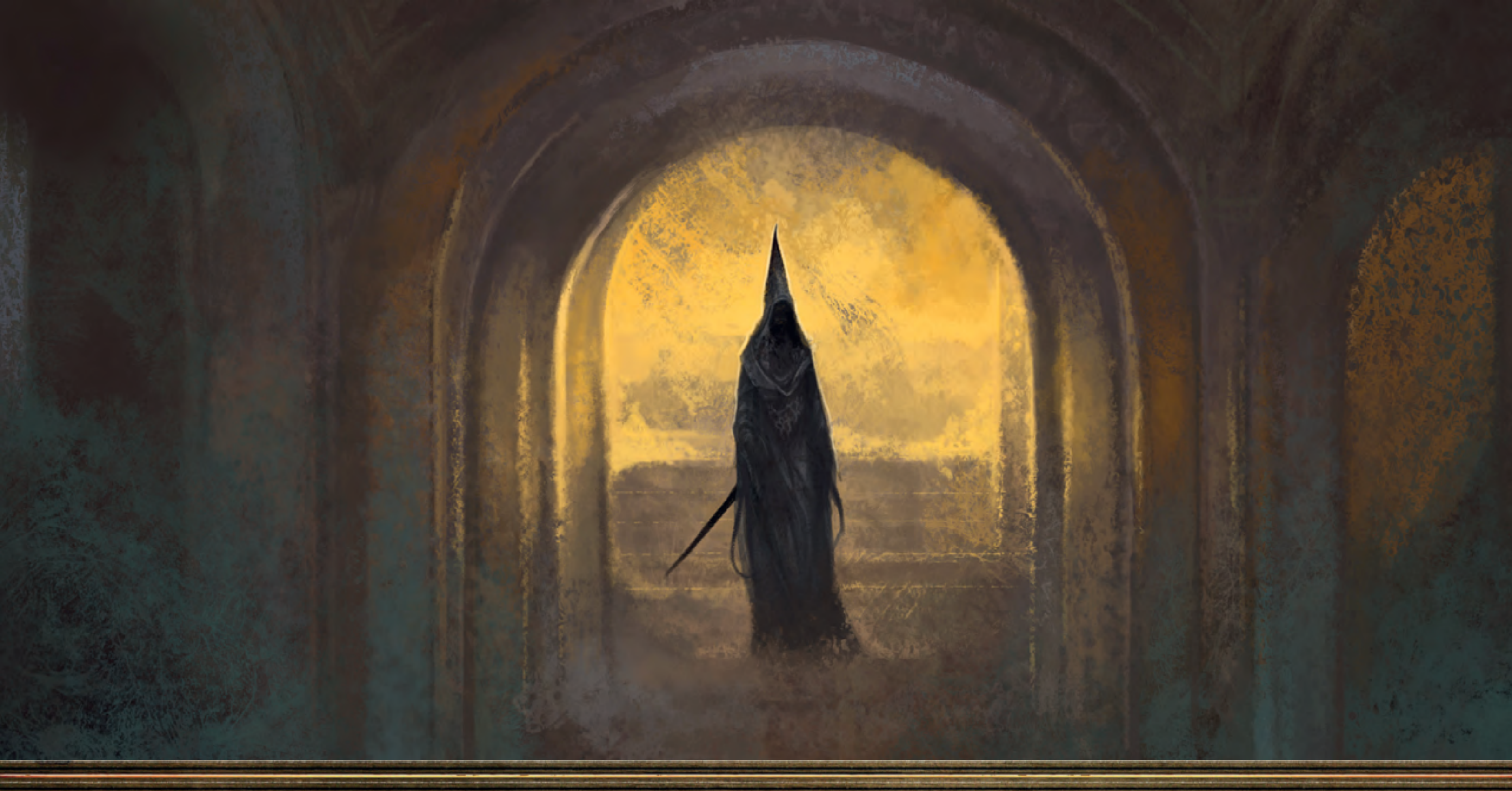
'Listen! We have but a short time! You must go from this door in this direction...' he gestures to his left, *'Follow the corridor, go down the stairs. Go quietly through the guard room – they are all sleeping off the drugged wine I gave them. Take the right-hand passage out and then go up two flights of stairs. You will come to a canal, with a dock. Find a craft or swim out. Go! Just before dawn, look for a light on the southern wall. He will help you! Go! I must find Balin now.'*

With this, he unlocks the door.

The Shadow of the North

In the corridor, Jofur hands the companions a small bundle containing some bread and a flask. There might even be a few simple weapons as well (a few daggers and knives). But as Jofur reaches out, the light from the torches grows suddenly dim and there is a chill in the air. Jofur drops the bundle, and the flask shatters. Blood-red wine stains the stones of the corridor. *'Go! Go! You must fly! There is no time!'* he shrieks.

At the end of the corridor a hooded and robed figure appears, a corroded iron sword gripped in its mailed hand. The air about the figure flickers with black fire. An



excruciatingly high-pitched wail slices through the air, rendering fear in all. The Sorcerer has used his Thing of Terror feature, see page 154.

Jofur gestures desperately for the companions to flee. *'Run you fools!'* He draws his sword and grabs a torch from the wall. Then, with the battlecry of his Easterling ancestors, he charges towards the Nazûl. It is time to go.

The Company Remains

Exceptionally bold companions might not allow Jofur to stand alone against the Ringwraith. But they are largely unarmed and certainly unarmoured. It is unlikely that they will defeat the Nazgûl and the corridor is too narrow for them to aid Jofur much. He will again beg them to run.

If they insist on fighting, perhaps using torches, then a Loremaster might allow them a slight victory. The Sorcerer relents for a moment and Jofur and the heroes can make a mad dash for it. Somewhere along the way, Jofur will make a different turn, explaining that he goes to seek Balin out.

Otherwise, if the heroes are insistent on the combat then the Sorcerer of Forod will unleash all of his might upon them (see page 154). After all, he came to kill them in their cell. Jofur will fall, and perhaps some of the companions as well. Balin might arrive suddenly, having broken free of his own cell and liberated some swords from the guards, possibly giving the heroes a chance to make a fighting retreat. Sooner or later, the heroes must escape the way Jofur suggested, perhaps with a Nazgûl chasing them.

In the event that the heroes somehow gain the upper hand, the Sorcerer will not let himself be destroyed here. Eventually he will fade into the shadows, and make ready the next stage of his plan.

The Way Out

Jofur's instructions are accurate and if the Company follows them, they can escape the deep cells by an underground canal. There might be a leaky old rowboat tied to the dock, or a listing raft. Or the Loremaster may choose to make the companions swim through the freezing water and tough it out in a swim through the dark in the fast flowing river (causing each hero to gain at least one level of Exhaustion). You might add any number of complications to this scene:

- The heroes might need to make **DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth)** checks to get past the guards.
- The players might be expected to have remembered Jofur's instructions, or the scout must make a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to get back on track. Failure means all the companions gain a level of Exhaustion from wandering the lightless tunnels for hours.
- The Nazgûl might decide to pursue them through the tunnels. The Loremaster might then have the heroes make **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** or **Strength (Athletics)** checks to dodge the alerted guards, a **DC 15 Intelligence (Riddle)** check to pick the right way in the maze, and another **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check to put enough space between them and the Sorcerer to escape. Of course they will escape, but it will be by the skin of their teeth and there should be real tension until they reach the River.

EXILE FROM DALE

If the Company was lucky enough to earn this result, armed guards soon escort them from the guardroom, through the lavishly appointed rooms of the palace and out onto the city streets. As the escort proceeds, certain guards hang back at designated checkpoints whilst other guards join the party. Perceptive heroes might soon realise that they are soon surrounded by only Jofur's hand-picked guards. There is no sign of Balin — he was taken a different way.

Thegn Jofur joins the group as they approach the city gates. While he sternly lectures the heroes on receiving such a light sentence for their various crimes, he passes a scrap of parchment to one of the heroes. Once outside of the city, their gear is returned to them and the captain of the guard repeats King Bard's injunction against returning for a year and a day.

When the heroes can examine the note, it says *'Look for a light on the south wall just before dawn. A friend will be waiting.'*

- Part Four -
The City of Bells

For one reason or another, the companions are standing outside the southern wall of Dale just before dawn. Just before dawn, one of them sees a faintly glowing red light at a certain spot along the wall.

When the heroes approach, they will be greeted by a familiar smell — pipeweed alight and being vigorously smoked by a certain Wizard of renown. He is sitting on the top of the wall and, with one foot, he kicks down a rope ladder. *'I was beginning to wonder when you would arrive.'* he says in greeting.

Once the heroes climb up, they can tell him all about their experiences. If they have seen the Sorcerer, then Gandalf nods gravely.

'One of the greatest trials of both Dale and Erebor is coming to pass. Smaug would laugh if he could see that City and Mountain are at each other's throat. We can only hope that we will be able to upset the Enemy's plans.'

Gandalf urges the companions to return to Dale — not in the open, but in secret. He says that they have many friends there, and they should be able to find help. When the heroes ready, they must meet him in Erebor.

'Now, I have a missing Dwarf and some traitorous nobles to attend to. Be careful, my friends!'

Quicker than quick, Gandalf is away and the sun is beginning to rise.

Straight to Erebor

Once they have spoken to Gandalf, the Company might decide to press on to the Lonely Mountain. This is unlikely, as the heroes are unprepared and probably worse for wear. But a determined or reckless group of Player-heroes (or a Company of heroes that call Erebor home) might be bent on it. In which case, skip directly to *Part Five: Inside*

Taking Stock

The heroes are likely at one of the lowest points of their careers, and it's worth taking a moment to tally up the situation.

- It is likely been more than a day since their last meal. Award each hero a level of Exhaustion. They cannot recover any hit points nor lose any levels of Exhaustion until they have had good food, a safe place to sleep and a warm change of clothes.

- Also, they have been betrayed by the sinister forces at work, and it seems as if the king himself has named them traitors to the crown. Each hero must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw or become Miserable until they find someone who will support them in their cause.
- They will likely need weapons, armour, and other equipment. This might be less pressing if they were simply exiled, but it is a good idea for heroes with distinctive wargear to set that equipment aside in lieu of simpler and less noticeable pieces.
- Finally, once they have recovered their wits and made themselves whole again, they will need to find some way into Erebor.

The remainder of this section is devoted to various personages and locales the companions might visit to get help. Interacting with individuals they previously met gives the players and their characters a chance to enjoy everything they achieved throughout their earlier adventures, and is the pay off of the truth that was denied them in the trial.

Since it is uncertain who the companions will visit and in what order, the Loremaster will have to weave a tapestry of sneaking through Dale using the following threads. The heroes begin at the south wall, close to the Commons.

The Need for Stealth

The Company must move around Dale, but they are wanted fugitives and will not want to attract the attention of the city guards. Fortunately, the City of Bells is still the heart of the North and there are many more people here than the Guard could ever hope to track.

Whenever the heroes move to a new district, have them make either a **DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth)** or **Intelligence (Riddle)** check. As long as at least half of the heroes succeed, they go unnoticed in the new area (you can still have fun narrating close calls for the companions who failed their individual checks). If more fail than succeed, then they've been spotted!

A generous Loremaster might have the first set of guards that find the Company be some of Jofur's men. They'll provide a knowing wink, caution the heroes to be more discreet, and then move off, saying '*These aren't the troublemakers we're looking for.*'

But otherwise the guards are alerted and the only reasonable course of action will be for the heroes to flee. Run this as a series of prolonged **Athletics** checks just like the previous chase in Dale (see page 19). Each hero that gets 5 successes has given the guards the slip. Heroes who fail to get the needed successes within 8 checks are thrown into the deep cells and won't be seen again until the end of the adventure, if at all.

Rumours in the City

The companions are known to the Dale-folk, and their imprisonment has met with mixed reactions. As they sneak about town the heroes might overhear some talk:

- Horror that they and Balin were traitors.
- Shock that King Bard would imprison or execute such heroes.
- Stark warnings against the wandering life.
- Advice to keep one's head down in such times.
- This is proof of the ill-intent of Dwarves and indeed all strangers.
- War is inevitable now.
- People wondering if they should pack up and leave the city now.
- The good times are over — war was always coming.

The Commons (Katun)

If the heroes head straight into this jumbled area of tents and temporary huts they do not need to make checks to avoid the Guards at this early hour. Katun and her fellow Easterling merchants can be found here. Katun herself has just set down to breakfast in a large purple and gold tent where she normally conducts trade meetings. She can provide the following assistance:

Advice. If the companions speak to her of the Nazgûl, then the merchant nods. She has seen and heard enough in the alleyways and dark passages of Dale to make her think an emissary of the Dark Lord has come. She can tell the heroes of how these villains plague the land of her birth, setting brother against brother and sister against sister. She is too mournful of her own past to give very many details, but she warns that Dale is in terrible danger if a Wraith is in the city. Katun is wise enough that she may suggest to the Company to visit others within the city who will be favourable to them.

Comforts. If the heroes have good relations with the Easterlings (having shown Katun and her fellows respect in **The Silver Needle**, for example) then she will provide new clothing for the heroes from her stocks of fine Eastern garments. Such garb allows each companion to make any checks to avoid guards with Advantage. While Katun sets a fine table — exceptionally strong tea, flat-bread and honey — she often shares her food with newcomers to the Commons. There's enough food on offer for one companion to have their fill, or the Company can share the food out. The first time they do this, each hero gains Inspiration. The second time counts as enough food for everyone to have eaten their fill.

Weapons. If Katun owes more to the heroes (for example, if they saved her life or livelihood during their adventures) then she can provide some weapons — curved swords (scimitars), strange-handled daggers and dark-wooded short bows to the heroes as well.

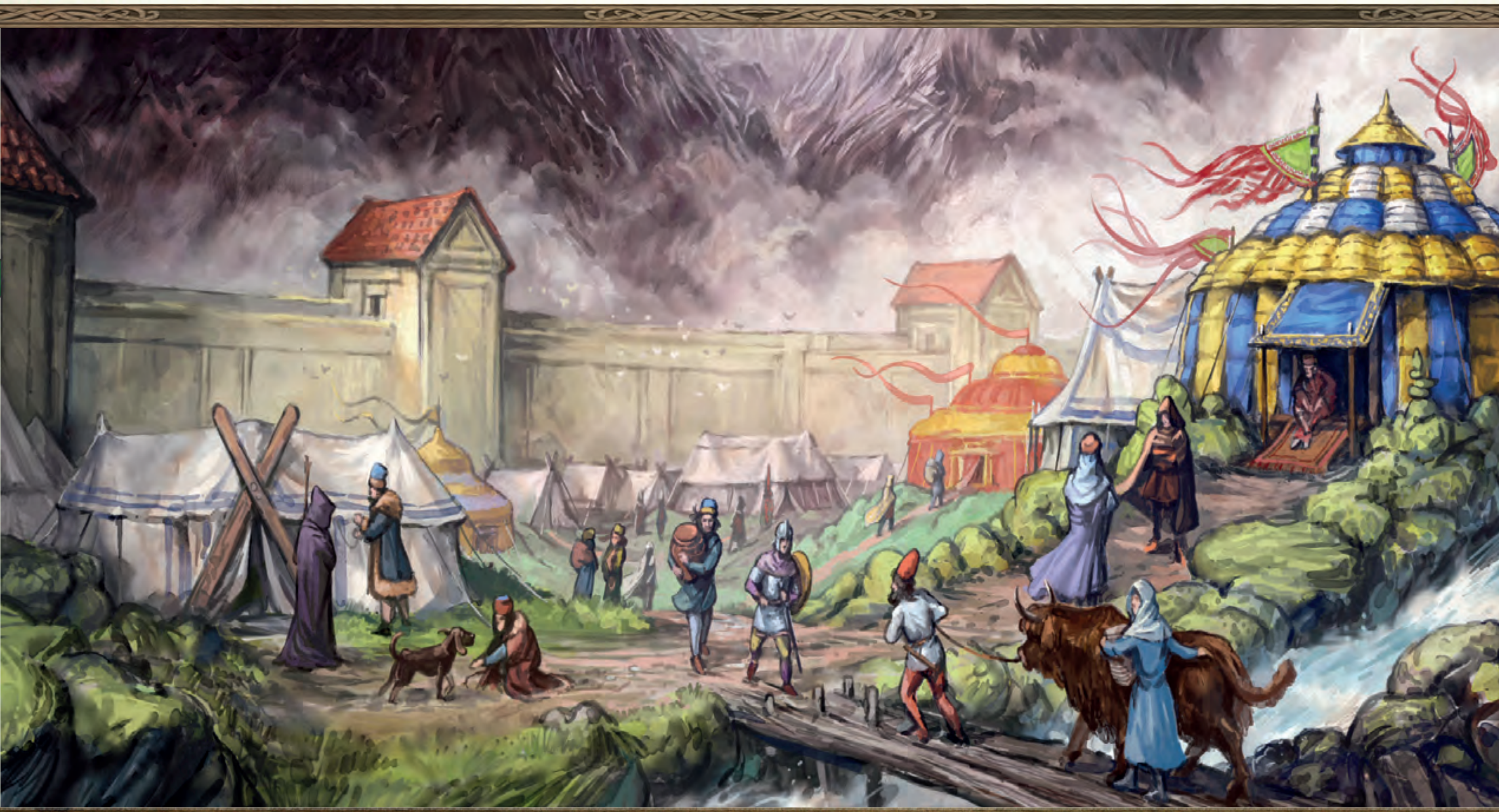
Anvil Way (Thrun's Workshop)

The Company may wish to visit Thrun's workshop to ascertain the truth of the charges against them. Sadly, from the outside nothing contradicts the story told by Lord Hakon during the trial: the news about Thrun's death seems correct, and his workshop is closed.

But for now his workshop is unoccupied and unwatched. The door has a sturdy Dwarven lock on it, but it is in a secluded side street, so a determined companion might sneak in a window — a **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** or **Strength (Athletics)** check or pick the lock — a **DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools)** check. Dwarves make this check with Advantage.

Once inside, the heroes find the following:

Comforts. Thrun was fond of the many different food-stalls of Market Square and thus kept no provisions here. But he had a small bedroom above his workshop. There is a bed there and a chest with a few blankets and a couple of spare travelling cloaks (with detachable hoods). The Company can rest here.



Fireworks. Thrun does have a small collection of fireworks. Heroes that decide to use them in combat might be able to use them in various ways. See *Using Fireworks in Battle,* below.

Using Fireworks in Battle

Inventive (or desperate) heroes might wish to employ fireworks against their enemies. It is up to the Loremaster's discretion, but three possible rulings might be:

- A firework can be launched at a foe within 60 feet. The hero must make a Dexterity attack roll at Disadvantage. The firework does 7 (2d6) fire damage, but if the attack roll is a natural 1, the damage is applied to the hero instead.
- A firework can be employed as a distraction. Enemies within 30 feet of the firework must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or have Disadvantage on their attack rolls until the end of their next turn.
- Fireworks might trigger an adversary's Fear of Fire if they are within range.

Mechanical birds. Many varieties of Thrun's speciality craft can be found, in various states of repair or development. The heroes can spend some time working on a single bird that could fly from one hero to another (a distance of 240 ft, perhaps carrying a note or very small item) or gather up a flock of them. When the flock is activated, they won't fly very far but they're incredibly distracting — a companion can activate the flock as an action in combat and any foe within 30 ft has Disadvantage on attack rolls for the next two rounds.

Traces of Treachery. If the companions search the workshop, they find evidence suggesting that Thrun struggled against someone, overturning chairs and throwing tools all over the place. A **DC 20 Intelligence** (**Investigation** or **Riddle**) check suggests another version: Thrun was alone, and wrecked his house while suffering from great pain! Among the fragments of a smashed mechanical contraption lies a last, damning piece of evidence: a small cup of silver, one from which Thrun used to drink when eating out.

Weapons. Unarmed heroes won't find proper wargear here, but they can use some of Thrun's larger tools as weapons. Chisels and knives can serve as daggers, and there are a couple of small hand-axes as well.

Brokenstone

Heroes on the run might remember the training barracks that Longo the Bandit-lord used long ago, especially if they discovered the secret canal entrance. Unfortunately, the tumbled-down building is only in a worse state. It can be a hideout, but it doesn't provide anything other than a place to lie low for a time.

Residential Quarter (Domi)

The companions will visit the Residential Quarter if they try to find Domi, the scholar from the Blue Mountains (see **To Dungeons Deep**, page 46). The Dwarf has yet to return west, and stays in a comfortable house not far from the 'Nest', the keep of the City Guard. If the Company manages to sneak up to his front door, Domi will be shocked to see them alive but will listen to what they have to say. He has followed their fortunes closely since they aided him and he believes that they have been wronged. Domi can only speak vaguely of dark forces moving in Dale, seeking to bring ruin to them all.

Domi can provide the following benefits to the Company:

Comforts. The scholar does not keep much food in his lodgings, but can supply some bread, meat, and drink. It can make a fine meal for a single person (fulfilling that requirement, see *Taking Stock* on page 135) or it can be shared amongst the Company. Doing so offers meagre compensation for hunger, but does strengthen the bond between the heroes. The first time they share food each companion gains Inspiration. The second time they share food, the heroes are no longer hungry.

Papers. Domi can write a letter of introduction for the Company. If the heroes present it at the gates of Erebor, they will be allowed to pass within (see *The Front Gate,* page overleaf).

Weapons. If the companions are really stuck for weapons he will gift them his belt. It holds a finely-made short sword and a dagger. Should the heroes ask him to procure more, the Dwarf will sternly refuse — he will not risk shopping for weapons on behalf of the Company.

A Kingly Gift. If the Loremaster deems that the companions have convinced Domi that they can effectively oppose the evil that is threatening the North, the Dwarf sighs, as he has made a weighty decision. Operating a hidden mechanism, Domi opens a secret door and descends a narrow set of stairs, bidding the heroes to wait. When he returns, the Dwarf is carrying a bundle: the Coat of Silver Mail! *'I have been entrusted with it, to see if I can learn more of its history. But now my heart tells me that it is the time for action and not study. Take it.'* (see page 47 for the enchantments laid on the armour.)

The Royal Palace (King Bard)

With the heroes being exiles or maybe even fugitives, the Royal Palace is off-limits for them. Should they show their face there, they would be immediately arrested. This risk notwithstanding, it is possible that very experienced companions would be insistent that if they just speak to the king in private all will be resolved.

If the heroes have solid bonds of friendship with the king, this might indeed come to pass. King Bard is not in his best state of mind though — during the course of *Erebor Adventures*, Bard has become distant, as he fears his kingdom is threatened and suspects everyone. He will need more than just reassurances, the Player-heroes must bring proof (of the scheming of the Nazgûl, of their innocence, etc.).

The Loremaster can exploit this turn of events in various ways. For example, if Thegn Jofur is alive (if the heroes were exiled or fled from the guards and never faced trial) then the Sorcerer of Forod will attack while the companions are conferring with the king. This aggression will give Jofur another chance to heroically sacrifice himself so that the king and the heroes can flee to Erebor unhindered.

The Quays (Balin's House)

Balin's small house is under constant watch. If the heroes dare to approach, then they must make two checks to avoid the Guard (one for entering the district and one for approaching the house). Any companion with appropriate traits (such as Suspicious, Wary or especially Foresighted) should receive a warning. If the heroes try to enter the house without distracting its watchers, then they'll be arrested again (or perhaps for the first time. If this is the case, then proceed to *The Trial* above). Those who do manage to sneak into the house will find that someone has destroyed the place, apparently seeking any scrap of evidence that they could find.

Elstan's Cottage

The heroes will have to leave Dale to reach the cottage of the old knight. Elstan is glad to see the Company — they saved his life when he was left for dead and no evil rumours could turn him against them. He cautions them against being rash, but then changes his mind and urges them to save the town of Dale. Wet-eyed, he will press onto them all the wargear he possesses and give them a token that should allow them to pass the gates of Erebor. He's not sure if it still works, or will work in others' hands, but it is all he can offer.

The heroes can gain the following advantages:

Comforts. Elstan's cottage is small, too small for the heroes to find much rest here. He can provide them with some spare clothes and he has enough food to make a good meal for one person. The heroes can also share the food out. The first time they do this, each hero gains Inspiration. By the second time, each hero has gotten enough to eat.

Papers. Elstan's token will allow the heroes to enter Erebor, see The *Front Gate* on on the next page.

Weapons. Elstan keeps a set of weapons ready and stores various other weapons he has won or has been gifted throughout his career throughout his career in a large chest in his kitchen, wrapped in oiled cloths.. The precise weapons available are left to the Loremaster, but it is likely that the Company will be able to rearm here.

Comfort and Safety

Once each hero has eaten, received some new (and dry) clothes, and had a chance to sleep, they are eligible for a long rest. This will also reduce their level of Exhaustion by at least one level. Generous Loremasters might allow the heroes to benefit from more than one night's rest if the Company has been particularly resourceful during this segment of the adventure.

- PART FIVE -
INSIDE INFORMATION

This part of the adventure is written considering that the heroes have now managed, somehow, to recoup some of what has been stolen from them – dignity at least, if not their weapons and other belongings. Now, they are ready to go to Erebor in order to help Gandalf or warn Dáin at least that the Sorcerer of Forod seeks the Arkenstone.

Meanwhile...

Whether the heroes have seen the king after the trial or not, the words and deeds of the Company have not gone completely unnoticed by Bard: slowly, the Dragon-slayer is moved to action. He resolves to do so for a combination of reasons, based on the progress of the campaign so far. Maybe he was visited secretly by Balin and Gandalf, who came to him to warn him of impending danger, or maybe there is more in him of his old self than meets the eye after all, and he was able to puzzle out the situation by himself.

What is important is that King Bard heads to the Lonely Mountain with a small retinue, to meet with King Dáin, roughly at the same time as the heroes. Is he going to meet his old friend in anger, to accuse him of treachery, or is it wisdom that dictated this course of action? The Loremaster must decide, based on how King Bard has been portrayed so far in the campaign.

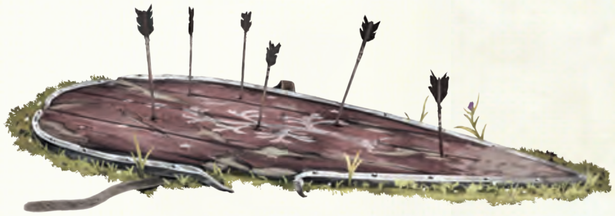
ENTERING EREBOR

There are only two ways to enter the Kingdom of the Lonely Mountain – through the front door or a secret entrance.

The Front Gate

Dwalin's Stone Guard warriors stand watch over the entrance to Erebor. Any Dwarf can get past them as a matter of course, but only a Dwarf of Erebor with a Proficiency Bonus of +4 or higher can bring along their companions without problems. Otherwise, foreigners are going to be questioned about their identity and business in the Lonely Mountain, and possibly be denied access, should they be recognised as fugitives or exiles from Dale. There are ways around this, of course. Elstan's token will allow them entrance, as will Domi's letter. In any of these cases, the 'Stone Guard' takes the heroes to Dwalin. It will be his job to arrange their visit to Erebor.

If the heroes are confident that their hard-earned fame should pave their way directly to the throne, they might demand an audience with King Dáin himself. For a Company which has done much in the service of Erebor, this might be the easiest route to success, but it's likely that Dwalin will need to be convinced of the Company's need to see his king (see *The Stubborn Warrior,* below).



Sneaking in The Front Door

The heroes might contrive other, more elaborate, plans to get into Erebor. Perhaps Katun has a shipment of cloth going to Erebor and the companions hide among her wares as they are delivered to the front gate. Or they might be friends with another merchant and make arrangements to be shipped in as another basket of grain or barrel full of apples. In these cases, once the heroes are in the Mountain, see *Finding the Way*, below.

A Secret Entrance

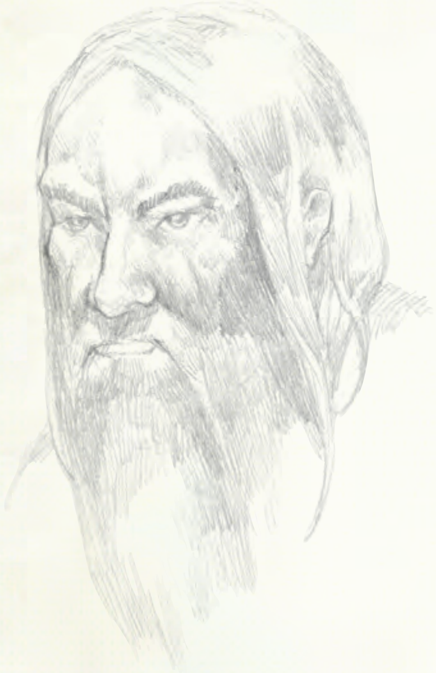
The companions might know of a hidden way into Erebor. Perhaps the fissure that Niping's allies used to gain access to the First Forge has not be adequately blocked up again, or perhaps the heroes might know of the Back Door (that said, they must either have an accomplice on the inside open the door for them, or they must be in possession of the Key of Erebor – a rather unlikely possibility!)

Once they have gained entrance to the Mountain, they must find Dáin. See *Finding the Way*, below.

9

The Stubborn Warrior

If the Stone Guard have either stopped the Company from entering Erebor or caught them sneaking about, they will escort the companions to Dwalin. The old warrior is quite on edge... the speaker for the Company will make their Introduction at Disadvantage. If Dwalin is predisposed against the heroes (65 and *Finding the Way*, overleaf) then the Introduction check is automatically failed.



Introduction

The heroes will certainly want to give some account of themselves, although they might already be known to Dwalin. If the heroes were caught by the Stone Guard they automatically fail their Introduction check. Dwalin sees them as only prisoners and conspirators in this case.

Interaction

Word has not yet reached Dwalin's ears of Gandalf and Balin coming to Erebor (the Wizard and the Dwarf might have some secret way or the 'Stone Guard' found it unremarkable enough not to send a messenger to Dwalin), but he knows that King Bard is cloistered with King Dáin. Here are some various approaches the Company might take and the required skill for the Final Audience check:

- **King Bard has been tricked!** To convince Dwalin that the soft Men of Dale have been affected by the Shadow requires a **Persuasion** check with Advantage.
- **King Dáin is in danger!** Convincing Dwalin that his battle-tested king is under threat is much harder. This needs an **Intimidation** check with Disadvantage.
- **The Nazgûl seek the Arkenstone!** Everyone knows that the jewel of Erebor is safe in Thorin's tomb. To convince Dwalin otherwise requires a **Persuasion** check with Disadvantage.
- ***We are expected visitors!*** Dáin said nothing to Dwalin about the Company, but as long as they presented themselves at the Front Gate, this is an ordinary **Traditions** check.

Final Audience Check

Dwalin's final decision is based on the results of the Final Audience check.

Failure. Dwalin doesn't know what to make of the Company, but he's not letting them see Dáin immediately. He instructs the Stone Guard to escort the heroes to a holding area. See *Breaking Free*, below.

Success by 0-5. Dwalin believes that the Company might have some business with King Dáin. He instructs the Stone Guard to escort them to the Great Hall of Thráin. From here, the Company can hear echoing voices in a side chamber and come to the Tomb themselves (again, see *Breaking Free*, below).

Success by 6+ Dwalin realises that King Dáin and Erebor are in great peril. He personally escorts the heroes to King Dáin at the Tomb of Thorin Oakenshield.

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Finding the Way

Once inside the Mountain, if the heroes want to visit the Arkenstone's resting place, they must find their way to the Great Hall of Thráin and then the Tomb of Thorin Oakenshield. Otherwise, they will likely be heading for the Great Chamber of Thrór, the seat of the King under the Mountain.

Heroes sneaking around must make a series of ability checks: a **DC 15 Intelligence (Riddle)** check to find the way, and a **DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth)** group check to avoid being noticed by the Dwarves of Erebor — the halls of Erebor are still somewhat dark and many Dwarves are focused only on their own tasks.

If a Dwarf companion can lead the Company, then the Riddle checks are not required. If more than half the Company fails any one Stealth check then they have been spotted by the Stone Guard, who will escort them to Dwalin (see *The Stubborn Warrior*, above and Dwalin is predisposed against the heroes).

- It takes four sets of successful checks to get from the Front Gate to the Great Chamber of Thrór; six successes to get from either the Front Gate or the Great Chamber to the Great Hall of Thráin. From a secret entrance four successes are required to get to the Great Hall, or six successes to get to the Great Chamber.

Companions might be wise enough to listen in to nearby Dwarven gossip. A hero who makes a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** check has caught enough familiar words to know that the king is having a council at the Tomb of Thorin Oakenshield.

9

Breaking Free

Heroes who have been caught by the Stone Guard, and especially those who are being escorted to a holding area to wait upon King Dáin, might hear the raised voices of King Bard, Balin, Gandalf, and King Dáin echoing by some chance of the stonework. Heroes who act quickly can momentarily break free from the guards (or find some way to allow themselves to be noticed by the assembled Great and Good).

To escape, a companion must succeed on a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** check. After a brief run, the hero is caught once again, but not before they are seen by Balin: with a wave of his hand the old Dwarf dismisses the Stone Guard. The heroes have made it in time to see the meeting of two powerful lords. But what words will pass between them?

– Part Six –
The Concert of Kings

King Bard and King Dáin hold their council in the Tomb of Thorin Oakenshield. Perhaps it was Gandalf who chose this meeting place, or it might have been Dáin in an attempt to remind Bard of the past that unites both kingdoms.

Dark Business

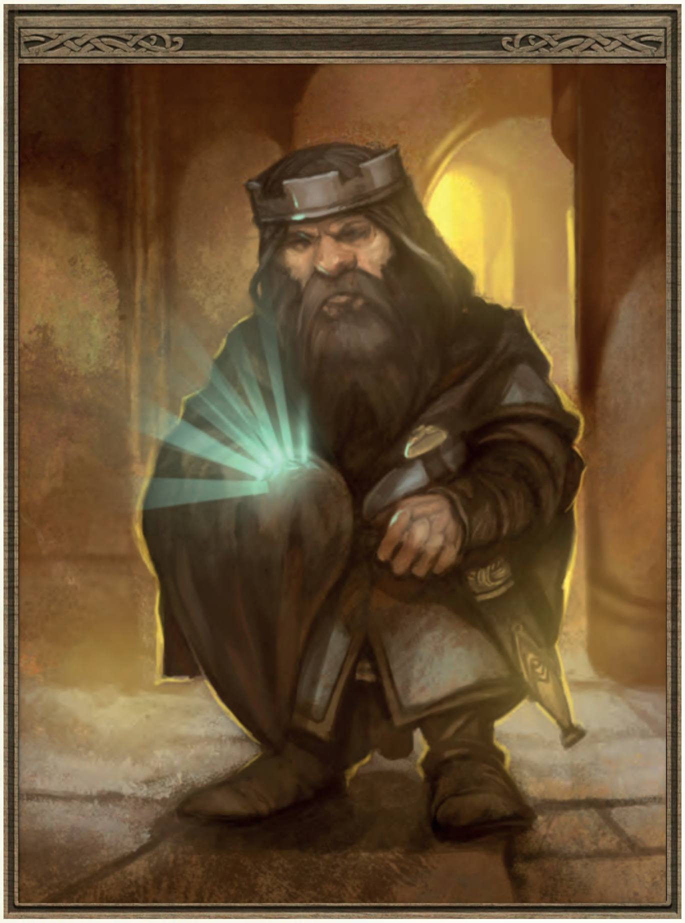
Thorin's mausoleum is a wide room, dominated by a large stone casket. The outer lid holds a large gemstone, cut in imitation of the original Arkenstone but without its inner fire. Dáin removed the original as soon as he received word from Gandalf of the Nazgûl's plans.

The chamber is at least fifty feet on a side. The high walls are carved with many reliefs, illustrating the ancestral history of the house of Durin. Above, high-set sconces flicker with an amber light. (See also the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide*, page 16).

The tomb is neither empty nor silent — King Bard, King Dáin, Balin, and Gandalf can all be present based on how the events of the adventure unfolded, as well as a small crowd of courtiers and guards for each of the lords.

King Bard. Whether in wrath, or in the mood to make peace, as a monarch and once-staunch ally, King Bard was allowed entry to the Mountain. He may be extremely short-tempered having had to demand an audience and been kept waiting, or he may be back to his old noble self, intent on righting a wrong.

King Dáin. Dáin holds the Arkenstone, folded into his cloak; its radiant light pours from the fabric. The king's thoughts lie heavy with the burden of rulership – the Nazgûl focused on the more easily corrupted Men of Dale and he has been caught off-guard by the severity of the threat he now faces.



Balin. The old Dwarf likely makes a reappearance. If the players are not great talkers, then Balin can be useful to unpack recent events, and set the record straight. He is still in a poor state from his earlier capture, and is in no shape to steal anyone's thunder in a battle. Though, as ever, his determination is undimmed.

The Grey Pilgrim. Gandalf may also be present. He is worried, for he fears that the power of a Ringwraith might prove too much for the rulers of the North. He will do what he can to spur the companions to prove themselves as heroes worthy of their fame.

Bitter Words or Kind Deeds

Whether they meet in anger, yelling dire imprecations at one another, or if in a more reflective, remorseful mood, the Company will come upon this scene at its height. Either the two kings are about to apologise to one another and renew their bonds of friendship, or declare outright war between the kingdoms.

The companions have their chance to resolve the differences that have marred the friendship between the two kings. Whether that comes from warning them of the imminent threat or reminding them of oaths spoken, the heroes can succeed in causing Dáin and Bard to put aside their quarrel.

If the events that transpired so far haven't seriously compromised the bonds uniting the two kingdoms, then the heroes witness what is simply a heartwarming scene of two old companions rekindling a friendship that was almost lost.

Otherwise, the scene that unfolds is a perfect example of how the Shadow corrupts the spirit of the Free Peoples from the inside, sowing fear and doubt in the minds of the weak and the mighty, turning brother against brother, friend against friend.

In both cases, the Company has a chance to clear their reputation after the humiliation suffered during the trial, offering any new item of proof they might have gathered so far.

Just before things are about to conclude, with either Bard and Dáin about to come to physical blows, or to embrace as old friends, a deeper shadow darkens the chamber...

ENTER THE NAZGÛL

An enemy unlike any other has come to the Mountain. From the crypts below the Tomb of Thorin, the Sorcerer of Forod enters the chamber. He has come to claim the Arkenstone, whether or not he succeeded in destroying the friendship between the two kings. The dark figure moves forward. Gandalf raises his staff as the companions prepare for battle. Any courtiers flee in utter terror.

When the heroes start to think that with Gandalf at their side the odds aren't that bad, one, two, perhaps three or more Ringwraiths join the Sorcerer from the shadows. Clad in hooded black robes and bedecked with the accoutrements of warrior-kings of old, they wield tarnished sword-blades, gleaming with a sickly light.

As the assembled characters gasp, the Sorcerer of Forod sweeps his pale hand across their number, invoking his *Terror of Desire* feature (see page 153). Then, the Ringwraiths shriek, their voice like that of ancient terror-birds of elder days, and rush towards Dáin and the Arkenstone, silvery corpse-hands grasping for the jewel. Dáin suddenly looks very small indeed.

For the conclusion of the adventure, the Loremaster can choose between the following two options: fight (see *A Desperate Battle*, opposite) or flight.

The Final Confrontation

For heroes with a penchant for dramatic conclusions, a battle with the Ringwraiths in the Tomb of Thorin Oakenshield may be the most suitable ending to the adventure, if not to their entire adventuring career! More cautious heroes might prefer to focus on preventing the Nazgûl from achieving their nefarious objective and also living to see another day.

If they haven't realised yet that it's the Arkenstone that the Ringwraiths want, Gandalf spells it out for them: the voice of the Grey Wizard resounds clearly in their ears, as if Gandalf was speaking in their minds.

'They must not be allowed to claim the Arkenstone!' he says. *'But we can use their desire against them. Take the jewel to the Dawn Terrace!'* The companions receive a vision of a chamber high above them, with a great mechanism that tracks the motion of the Sun in the sky.

Gandalf raises up his staff and shouts out. *'Go back to the darkness! Flee, servants of Mordor!'* The Ringwraiths only laugh, but it is the moment that the Wizard needed. Bard and Balin draw their weapons and Dáin opens his cloak, revealing the Arkenstone. He nods to the companions and then tosses the priceless jewel to them.

'Take it and run! Keep safe the Heart of the Mountain!'

A Desperate Battle

Some heroes will not give way to the Nazgûl, no matter what Gandalf wishes. In this case, Dáin keeps the Arkenstone himself. The heroes must face all the other Ringwraiths first and only then will Morlach fall to Bard's sword and Balin's axe. The shade of the Sorcerer will depart for Mordor and it will be years before Sauron attempts to corrupt the Mountain again.

– Part Seven –
Flight into the Mountain

The following section covers the Company's desperate journey through Erebor as they are pursued by the Nazgûl. From the Tomb of Thorin Oakenshield, they will navigate through the Mountain, hopefully reaching the Dawn Terrace before the Ringwraiths catch them.

The Pursuit

Each time the heroes enter a new area, they will make a check to navigate to their next destination. Even on a failed check, the heroes keep moving forward. There is no time to double-back, so they simply go a more circuitous route to their destination. But the enemy is close on their heels...

- If a Dwarf serves as a Guide, the navigation roll is a **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival)** check. If another hero serves as Guide instead, a **DC 18 Intelligence (Riddle)** check is required instead.

Each location gives two possible destinations: one if the companions succeed, the other if they fail.

Lead Rating

At all times, the heroes have a Lead value, which starts at 1. As long as the Lead does not reach 0, the companions are ahead of the Nazgûl. When the Lead reaches 0, the Ringwraiths have caught up. When that happens, the heroes must either redouble their efforts or face the enemy in battle.

The Lead rating of the Company can be decreased by a bad decision, or a bad roll (see the various location descriptions below). On the other hand, other options may allow the companions to distance themselves from the pursuing wraiths.

- In one instance, one or more heroes can stay behind, buying time for the others. Each hero that chooses this option increases the Lead by 1. However, their hero will face the combined might of the Nazgûl and are unlikely to survive the fight. (A kind Loremaster might subject such a hero to the Black Breath — see page 155 — instead of slaying them outright.)

- The heroes might be able to interact with the environment to create distractions or obstacles for their pursuers. Each area below will note certain opportunities for the heroes to interact with the environment. (Note that Dáin will be understanding of some property damage, but putting innocents in danger is a Misdeed worthy of Shadow points.)

- The Company could split up, with some of them going one way (the destination for a successful navigation check) and others going another way (the destination for a failed check). This increases Lead by 1, but is only effective once.

- One of the prominent Loremaster characters (such as Dwalin, Balin, King Bard, or someone else) could suddenly interfere, adding to the Company's Lead by 1.

The Tomb of Thorin Oakenshield

The companions leave the mausoleum of the slain king, but which way do they head? This is their first navigation check.

If they succeed, then they head into the crypts for a moment, only to turn aside soon afterwards. An open arch leads to a stairwell. The companions hurry down the stairs. The stone steps are shallow and turn to the left every twenty paces or so. Soon the ceiling is uncomfortably close, and the tallest of the Company must crouch down. The heroes then reach a long, straight passageway. Following it, they emerge into a lower accessway that leads into the **Heart of the Deeps** (see page 48).

If they fail, the Company must simply flee to *The Great Hall of Thrain* (see below) outside the chamber.

The Great Hall of Thrain

This vast chamber used to be the lair of Smaug and there is still a feeling of unease in the dark corners of the huge room. Now, with the Ringwraiths on their heels, the companions might feel like there is a lurking danger in every shadow. The Nazgûl shriek and the darkness seems to grow. Each companion must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw. Those that fail are Miserable (see page 183 of the *Player's Guide*)until the end of the chase.

If the Guide succeeds at the navigation check, the Company heads out one of the many passageways at the far end. They race past many workshops; surprised Dwarven artisans might glance up at the fleeing heroes, but are just as likely to stay focused on their tasks. Eventually, they come to a great circular chamber: the *Entrance to the Deeps* (see page 146).

If the Guide fails, then the companions are hard-pressed. They push open a sturdy stone door, perhaps hoping that they can wedge it shut afterwards. But now they are in the *Chamber of Mazarbul* (see below).

9 Entrance to the Deeps

Another vast chamber opens up inside the Mountain, a great domed ceiling overhead. The room is circular and many, many passageways all meet here. Most of them slope down into the darkness, leading to various deeps. Several are flat, or slope slightly upwards. Most of those come to dead ends or sudden shafts that descend back into the lowest parts of Erebor. In the centre of the chamber, another passage spirals down into the darkness. A Company foolish enough to follow it would find themselves soon enough in the *Heart of the Deeps* (see page 148).

A successful check by the Guide allows them to choose the one passageway that leads to *The Great Causeway* (see page 149).

But a failure means they spent too much time investigating the many corridors: their **Lead is reduced by 1.** Eventually they choose a promising passageway: there is warmth and the smell of iron down the tunnel. It leads to *The First Forge* (see page 147).

9 Chamber of Mazarbul

The great stone door opens onto a wide rectangular hall. The air here is dry, and dusty with age, for many ancient books and other manuscripts fill the chamber. This is the great library and storehouse of Dwarven knowledge in Erebor and the Company has lead the Enemy here!

Munin (see page 20 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide)* is here, with a few other Dwarven scholars engaged in the processes of preservation, restoration, and reproduction of treasured knowledge. As the heroes approach, the Dwarves lay down, spill ink, and knock over stools. The scholars gasp in alarm. It is plain to the companions that simply fleeing the chamber invites the Nazgûl to slaughter the Dwarves as they stand.

The heroes must do something.

- The heroes could knock over the shelves near the chamber entrance, doing much damage to many irreplaceable tomes in the process. The players can either **add 1 to the Company's Lead** or give the scholars enough time to flee.

- The heroes could instead sacrifice some of their Lead (1 point) to make sure all of the scholars get out of sight. There are small antechambers that lead to reading tables or copying desks where they can hide.

If Skirfira is present (see page 69), she is brave enough to stand against the Nazgûl — a hero could toss her a weapon (and a shield would not go amiss). She will perish in the attempt, but, if she knows it is to protect the Arkenstone, then it is a good death. **This adds 1 to the Company's Lead**.

One of the heroes instead could stay behind. The doorway itself is narrow and a single companion could hold it, even against a Ringwraith, for a little while.

Fleeing the scene and allowing the scholars to be slain is a Misdeed and each hero receives 3 Shadow points immediately.

As the heroes leave, the Guide must once again make a navigation roll. **On a success,** they've left the records room by a corridor that leads to *The Great Causeway* (see page 149), **or on a failure** they flee into the heart of *Stángard* (see page 149).

The First Forge

The companions rush into another large chamber, its air filled with the heat of smelting furnaces and echoes with the ringing of hammers, the shouts of Dwarven workers, and the workings of various machinery. The heroes might have been here before, long ago, to foil Niping's treachery (see page 42). Due to those events, the furnaces are now well-patrolled by the Stone Guard and the Company will be challenged soon after they enter the chamber.

If their Guide is a Dwarf or a Dwarven hero openly bears the Arkenstone, a few breathless words are all that is needed to allow the companions to pass unheeded (gaining 1 Lead). Otherwise, the Guide must make a DC **15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check. On a failure, precious time is lost explaining things and the Company's Lead is reduced by 1. The heroes can now begin to navigate between the furnaces, smelters, and cauldrons of molten metal.

Soon afterwards, the Ringwraiths enter. The brave members of the Stone Guard advance upon their foe, but the Sorcerer has other plans. He holds up his hand and the machinery of The First Forge stops. The room trembles, the furnaces flare brightly, the smelters smoke profusely, and the cauldrons shiver in their holders. Flame and disaster are only moments away — the heroes must act!

- The heroes might remember from their previous visit that there are alarms in the chamber. It takes a successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** check to engage an alarm. If at least three alarms are tripped, the Dwarves receive enough warning to clear the chamber.
- Great cisterns of water rest above the furnaces. The Company may **reduce their Lead by 1** in order to climb up and release their sluice gates. Water pours forth and a great steam arises; it is a ruinous outcome for the forges, but it will save the smiths.
- A hero could challenge the Sorcerer in order to disrupt his magic. The Stone Guard will assist, but the Nazgûl are a foe beyond them and the companion will soon face the full wrath of the Ringwraiths alone.

If the Company simply flees, then some surviving Dwarves are able to open the channels and flood the chamber in order to prevent the fire from spreading. But the loss of life is immense. This outcome is worth an immediate gain of 3 Shadow points.

If the Guide succeeds at the navigation check, they are able to take one of the upper exits that leads to The Great Causeway (see below). **On a failure**, the heroes are forced to follow the only way they know. They charge down a corridor that leads to **Niping's Fissure** (see page 150).

The secret passage is now patrolled by the Stone Guard against another incursion, but they will scatter as the heroes charge out of the Mountain, the Ringwraiths at their heels.

HEART OF THE DEEPS

The companions follow a passageway to the great central shaft that forms the heart of the deeps. A stone span serves as a bridge over the yawning darkness, gently sloping up to another passageway that opens on the opposite side of the gulf. There are no handrails, guide ropes, or other safety features. Looking down into the chasm, they can only see darkness and the faintest signs of other stone bridges that cross the yawning deep. Above, the heroes can see the shadows of spans that cross above them.

From below, the heroes can hear echoing sounds of rock grinding against rock. Above, they chance to see a shadow moving on a span a hundred feet above them. The Ringwraith cries out, but it does not seem to be meant for the Company. Instead, from below there are answering echoes and the sounds of moving stones. The Stalker of the Deeps is coming!

The Nazgûl does not descend, knowing that the Stalker of the Deeps will not discriminate between friend and foe in its rage. Instead, it waits above for either the creature to destroy the heroes or for a weakened Company to stagger upward.

Quick Thinking and Quicker Action

Heroes who are fast on their feet might choose to collapse the tunnel that houses the Stalker. To do so, they must destroy at least three support beams. It takes 15 points of damage to destroy a beam, but an axe that produces a Critical Hit can break the wooden support in a single blow.

Heroes who collapse the tunnel in a single round of attacks gain 1 Lead. The Nazgûl were not expecting such an immediate reaction.

Stalker in the Deeps

Among the Dwarves who explore the deepest tunnels, there are legends of a silent killer who waits in the oldest and darkest places of the Mountain. Those who claim to have encountered it and survived speak of a huge mouth full of poison fangs surrounded by a snake-like head with

THE STALKER IN THE DEEPS

Huge Aberration (Nameless Thing)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	15 (+2)	27 (+8)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Armour Class 15 (Natural Armour)
Hit Points 230 (16d12+128)
Speed 30 ft

Skills Athletics +11, Perception +4, Stealth +6, Survival +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages None
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Swallow. After a successful Bite attack, the Stalker can use its bonus action to swallow the target if it is Medium or smaller. Swallowed creatures are Blinded and Restrained and take 13 (2d12) acid damage at the start of each of the Stalker's turns. If the Stalker dies, swallowed creatures are no longer Restrained and exit by using 10 ft of movement. the corpse

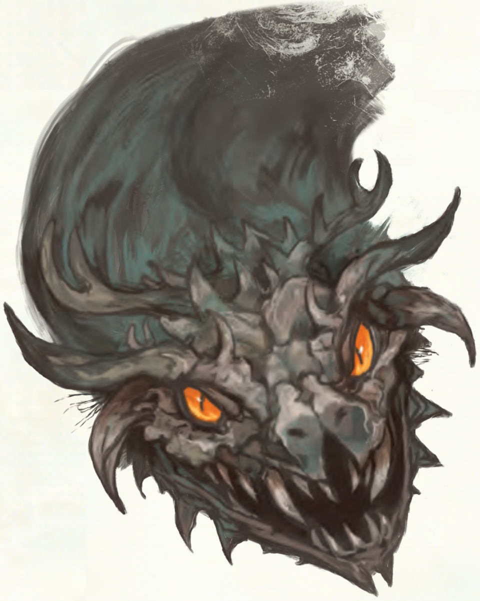
Venom. After a successful **Bite** attack, the Stalker can use its bonus action to inject venom into its target. The target must make a **DC 17 Constitution** saving throw. On a failure, the target takes 19 (3d12) poison damage and is Poisoned until it takes a short rest. On a success, the target takes half damage.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft, one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8+7) piercing damage.

Reactions

Great Might. The Stalker may use its reaction when it takes damage from a melee or ranged weapon attack to reduce the amount of damage by its Strength modifier (+7), to a minimum of 1 point of damage taken



a crown of darkened bone. But it is larger than any serpent that slithers in the grass.

Once the heroes have dealt with the Stalker, they can begin to climb their way out of the Deeps. Making progress requires one to cross a span, work your way upwards along the edge of the shaft, and cross another shaft to reach another higher passage. Heroes who spend enough time here can gain the top of the shaft and reach the *Entrance to the Deeps* (see page 146). **Reduce the Company's Lead by 1** if they choose this route.

A Guide that succeeds at their navigation check is able to instead find a shaft that leads to *The First Forge* (see page 147) instead. **On a failure** the Company must instead climb up to the entrance, as above.

The Great Causeway

This long passageway is one of the primary ways the Dwarves of Erebor move their great works through the Mountain. Thus it is wider and taller than most corridors and is joined by many tributaries on its course. At any time, day or night, there is traffic on the causeway — workers finished with their shift heading home (with perhaps a stop or two along the way), others just beginning their day, great slaps of raw marble or other stone being moved to a workroom, wagons of ore destined for the furnaces, carts of finished ironwork going to the Front Gate, and many more besides.

When the Nazgûl appear, they will cause panic on the road. But oftentimes there is too much traffic for fleeing to be practical. The heroes might elect to overturn carts or cut the lashes on loads in order to block the Causeway. Each member of the Company must make an **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** check. With 5 or more successes, the heroes have blocked enough of the Causeway that the Ringwraiths must follow using smaller passages that are rarely trafficked and thereby gain 1 Lead. Otherwise, the Company can spend 1 Lead to make another set of checks. Fleeing outright without at least attempting to block the Causeway is worth 3 or more Shadow points.

If the Guide's navigational check is successful, they can reach the short passageway to Gloin's Ladder (see overleaf). Otherwise, they take a wrong turn and find one of the staircases leading to *Stángard* (see below).

Stángard

The passageway the companions have been following intercepts a broad set of stairs. Racing up them, the heroes find themselves amidst the many alleyways that lead to private Dwarven abodes. The Company is in Stángard, the living quarters of Erebor. As long as the heroes keep to the main stairs heading to the town centre, the Dwarves living along this spur of the city have little to fear from the Nazgûl.

Once the companions have reached the main square, they have a few choices to make.

- The most responsible thing to do is ring the Bell of Stángard. A gift from Dale in more trusting days, its purpose is to warn those Dwarves in the city of some danger. It is in the very centre of the town and reaching it reduces **the Company's Lead by 2.**
- If not, the heroes can try and find the Iron Guard to raise the alarm. The staunch members of Dáin's personal bodyguard can stand against the assault of the Ringwraiths but they will fall eventually. A **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check makes the Dwarven warriors understand the threat. If successful, the heroes **add 1 to their Lead.**
- Simply continuing to flee means that the heroes are now leading the Nazgûl through the common areas of Stángard, where there are many shops, taverns, and

storehouses. They are certain to encounter unarmed Dwarves of all ages and the Ringwraiths will cause them much panic and terror in their pursuit. Each companion gains at least 5 points of Shadow if they simply run, but **the Company gains 1 Lead.**

If the Guide succeeds at the navigation check, then the Company heads unerringly for the passageway that leads to Gloin's Ladder (see below). **Otherwise** they must stop and ask for directions; the Ladder is the only way to the Dawn Terrace. **Reduce the Company's Lead by 1** in this case, but the heroes will still reach the Ladder.

9 GLOIN'S LADDER

This steep staircase is named after the son of Thorin I who, before the folk of Erebor first left the Mountain, carved it to gain access to the upper reaches of the mountain. It winds its way upwards in a tight spiral and its tall steps are another proof that it was a young Dwarf who planned such an ambitious undertaking.

These days it is rarely used, although it leads to places such as the Ice Terrace (see page 18 of the *Lonely Mountain Region Guide)*, the access corridors for the Towers of Thráin, and to the Dawn Terrace (see below). Once the heroes are on the Ladder, there is nothing left to do but climb. Each companion must make a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check. Heroes that fail the check gain a level of Exhaustion. A hero that succeeds at the check can choose to gain a level of Exhaustion. If they do so, **increase the Company's Lead by 1.**

If the number of failures outweighs the number of successes, then t**he Company's Lead is reduced by 1**. If the Nazgûl catch up to the heroes on the Ladder, even a single companion can hold them off for a long time on the narrow staircase.

After a long climb, the Company reaches the Dawn Terrace (see page 151).

11 NIPING'S FISSURE

The Company perhaps retraces their steps that they once took with Gunvar and his men when the traitorous lord attacked Erebor. They once again (or perhaps for the first time) must cross the stone bridge over a seemingly bottomless chasm. Each hero must make a **DC 10 Wisdom** saving throw or become Miserable (see page 42). They then must once again scramble past razor-edged rocks, vents of acrid gas, slippery rocks, and the cramped conditions of the long and twisting passage. Each hero must make a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check or take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.

Finally, the companions come to the actual fissure. It is narrow and getting out of it is harder than clambering down. Each hero must make another **Athletics** or **Acrobatics** check as above. On a failure, the companion slips and has a hard landing, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage.

Once outside, the Company finds itself in the narrow valley of Niping's fissure. It is gloomy here, the Sun is yet low on the horizon, and ragged clouds gather in the East. The Nazgûl come, and they will not be easily daunted, even by the Arkenstone.

The Battle of the Fissure

The Ringwraiths advance, and there is nowhere left for the heroes to flee. They have not reached their intended location, but at least they are outside and the Sun is rising, however slowly. The battle will be divided into three phases, dependant on the amount of light available.

- For the first three rounds, no light from the rising Sun reaches the shaded valley. If a companion wields the Arkenstone, any Nazgûl attacks against that hero are at Disadvantage.

- For the next three rounds, only the slightest glimmer reaches the valley, but it is enough to set the Heart of the Mountain aflame. If a member of the Company wields the stone, then every companion within 10 ft of that hero also gains the benefit of the Arkenstone (as above).

- During the last three rounds, day has come again. If a hero wields the Arkenstone it gleams with a brilliance that few can withstand. Each Nazgûl is at Disadvantage for all attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks. If the Nazgûl have not stolen the gem by the end of these three rounds, they forgo their black robes and flee, thin shadows in the light of the Sun.

Wielding the Arkenstone

The hero holding the Heart of the Mountain can reveal it as an action. The impact of the stone depends on the amount of sunlight available (see the effects listed above).

The Arkenstone is lost!

If the Company does battle with the Nazgûl inside Erebor or at Niping's Fissure, there's a chance that the Sorcerer's plan will come to fruition and the Ringwraiths will depart Erebor in possession of the Arkenstone. If that happens, there may be some ways to keep your game within the lore that we know from the Tale of Years.

Foremost, the Nazgûl are loathe to cross running water. This means that they are likely headed for the bridge of Celduin (see *Wilderland Adventures*, page 116 and on) and could be intercepted there. This gives the surviving heroes another chance at fighting the Nazgûl and a plausible way to recover the Arkenstone.

A less satisfactory resolution could be that Gandalf reveals that the companions have been carrying a decoy the entire time, its glow provided by a little magic of his own making. While frustrating, it does keep the true Arkenstone in Thorin's tomb for all time.

11 The Dawn Terrace

The companions exit the steep staircase and race eastwards along a newly carved passageway. It opens into a semicircular room, the ceiling and wall are a singular dome that disappears into a series of gears and stone pinions that traces the border of the room. The wall has one small slit in it. This is the Dawn Terrace, a newly constructed chamber that will allow the Dwarves to capture the first rays of any given morning for use in their wondrous devices. But today, Gandalf's plan is to use the first light of the Sun with the natural power of the Arkenstone.

The Wizard is not here yet, and surely the Nazgûl are not far behind.

- It will take six rounds for dawn to come. For each point of Lead remaining, that round passes uneventfully. Once the Lead reaches 0, the Nazgûl emerge into the chamber. A cold wind extinguishes all other sources of light. This darkness is magical and even Elves and Dwarves are at Disadvantage. A hero with a torch or a candle can use an action to relight it, but any light source only generates dim light in a 10 ft radius.

Dawn Breaks

On the seventh round, a thin ray of the Sun's light comes through the slit in the wall, piercing the darkness. If the hero bearing the Arkenstone places it within the beam, the gem flares and the entire chamber is illuminated by light too brilliant for mortal eyes! No one can take an action other than to shield their eyes from the glowing stone.

After a moment, the flare subsides to the light of a brightly burning bonfire. There is no sign of the Nazgûl. Gandalf will later explain that they have not been destroyed, but the magic binding their dread wills to unseen sinews was disrupted and it will be a long time before they are seen again in the North.

- Epilogue -

The Sorcerer's plot to steal the Arkenstone and plunge Mountain and City into war with each other has failed. Both King Bard and King Dáin thank the heroes for preventing disaster — there are still dark times ahead (especially for Bard) but today is a day of victory!

The Arkenstone is restored to its rightful place in the Tomb of Thorin Oakenshield. The two kings swear new oaths of friendship and loyalty over his grave, so that the Shadow will have no hope of setting them against each other again.

If members of the Company or their allies fell in battle against the Nazgûl, then their bodies are recovered. Dwarves will be laid to rest in a place of honour in the crypts of the Mountain, others might be laid to rest in Dale's cemetery.

The Company are fêted as heroes and they are given the freedom of both Erebor and Dale, meaning they gain the standard of living of a Dwarf of Erebor, their basic needs now being met without question in high style for the rest of their lives. Heroes that petition for a title from King Bard may find themselves well-rewarded. The king knows that he needs new advisors that will not succumb to the Enemy. They may also choose a holding in either city, if they wish.

The Smiths of Erebor labour long hours over the coming year, and King Bard opens the armoury of Girion. As a just reward, the companions are gifted unique weapons suited to their individual abilities. (The Loremaster may fashion such weapons using the rules for Legendary Weapons and Armour found on page 132 of the *Loremaster's Guide*).

A statue of Thegn Jofur is raised in The Commons. A statue of Balin is raised in Erebor. These require special stone from the Iron Hills, and precious metals found only in the Mountains of Mirkwood. If they are not ready to retire, the Companions might choose to lead an expedition to acquire the materials.

The Nazgûl are sorely punished by their master, stripped of their robes and forced to wander formless in agony for long decades before being allowed back into His favour. Eventually Sauron sends his Messenger back to Erebor to attempt to treat with Dáin, who recognises an old enemy and rebuffs them.

If, by some chance, the Arkenstone has been permanently lost, then the mood of the two kings is much more dour. They still swear oaths of loyalty to each other, but it has become evident to both of them that few of their subjects are able to stand against the Shadow.

APPENDIX A: THE NAZGÛL OF THE NORTH

Nine (rings) he gave to Mortal Men, proud and great, and so ensnared them. Long ago they fell under the dominion of the One, and they became ringwraiths, shadows under his great Shadow, his most terrible servants.

In *Erebor Adventures,* the evil that befalls both Dale and Erebor can be traced to the Sorcerer of Forod, one of the nine Ringwraiths — the chief and most powerful servants of Sauron, the Great Enemy.

The years after the capture of Dol Guldur and the restoration of Barad-dûr are ones of the Dark Lord reclaiming his ancient power. As their fate is inextricably linked to that of their Master, the Nazgûl of Dol Guldur are yet but a dark reflection of what the Nine will become in later on, when the Lord of the Rings will unleash them and their Black Captain to hunt for the One Ring.

In gaming terms, this lesser stature is reflected by the Sorcerer of Forod's Challenge rating: a relatively low value. Yet, this value is higher than that of the Nazgûl of Dol Guldur as presented in the *Mirkwood Campaign.* This is due to the solitary nature and importance of the Sorcerer's mission in the eye of the Dark Lord.

Dark Undead or Unclad and Invisible

The Nazgûl wear robes or suits of armour to assume a shape when they must have dealings with the living. But even when given a physical shape they cannot be easily destroyed, for the power of their Master is in them as long as the Ruling Ring endures. Use the Nazgûl's entry as Dark Undead when it confronts the heroes in physical form.

However, the Ringwraiths may choose to appear as incorporeal ghosts. In this form few weapons in Middle-earth can assault them, and even the Elves perceive them only as dark shadows upon the world. Use the Nazgûl's stats for Unclad and Invisible when they are spirits of creeping horror and dread. While Unclad and Invisible, a Ringwraith may make full use of his special features listed for that form and never loses his invisibility. Thus, heroes may be plagued by a foe that can strike at range and that they can barely perceive.

The Black Shadow

A victim of the Black Shadow remains Unconscious for a number of days equal to their Shadow score. For each day spent in this state, the hero must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw (this is reduced to DC 10 if tended to by someone familiar with *The Weapons of the Enemy.* See the *Player's Guide,* page 68). Each failed saving throw adds 1 Shadow point to the hero, but does not extend the time spent Unconscious.

Dreadful Spells

The Sorcerer knows several powerful magics that he can use against the heroes.

Terror of Desire

All heroes within 90 ft of the Ringwraith must make a **Wisdom** saving throw, with the DC equal to 10 plus the hero's total Shadow score. On a failure, the hero is caught up in a fantasy derived from their Shadow Weakness and is Stunned. At the beginning of the hero's turn, they can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If the hero rolls a natural 1, the companion suffers a Bout of Madness and the Terror of Desire effect ends.

Shadow of Fear

The Ringwraiths can terrorise mortals into doing their dark bidding. The Sorcerer may use its action to force the target to make a **DC 17 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failure, the Nazgûl can compel the hero to carry out some service (such as reporting information to the Ringwraith) or to perform a secret task. The compulsion lasts a number of weeks equal to the hero's current Shadow score.

A spellbound hero is loathe to perform the compelled action and is often nervous, moody, or morose. Other members of the Company who note the change in their Companion can make a **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Wisdom (Insight)** check to provoke the hero (those with *Dark Knowledge* make this check with Advantage). A successful check allows the target to make another saving throw against the spell, ending its effects on a success.

The Morgul-knife

"Alas! the wounds of this weapon are beyond my skill to heal."

The Sorcerer of Forod carries a Morgul-knife, the mark of the trust of his lord and of the importance of his task.

Enemies of the Nazgûl who die when pierced by a Morgul-knife do not rest, but become Fell Wraiths under the dominion of the Dark Lord. If a companion is struck by a Morgul-knife, the hero must make a Constitution saving throw. The DC is equal to 10 plus the damage done to the companion by the knife. If the strike reduces the hero to 0 hit points, they automatically fail the saving throw. If the hero fails the saving throw, the blade of the knife has broken, and a splinter of the evil thing is within the hero. Such an injury must be treated by a master of healing like Elrond Halfelven or a Scholar familiar with *The Weapons of the Enemy* as soon as possible. Treatment requires the healer tend to the victim during a long rest and succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom** (**Medicine**) check. If this does not happen, the victim becomes sick and does not recover, and will soon be overcome: the wounded hero resists for a number of days equal to 12 plus the victim's **Wisdom** modifier, then, if they are still without cure, they die in pain, only to rise later as a Fell Wraith.

But a Morgul-wound will never truly heal. A hero who sustained such a grim injury feels a great chill spreading from the spot where they were pierced whenever they traverse an area considered Blighted, or find themselves in sight of a Ringwraith. The companion must pass a **DC 20 Wisdom** saving throw or gain a level of Exhaustion.

THE SORCERER OF FOROD AS DARK UNDEAD

Medium Undead

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	21 (+5)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Armour Class 20 (Deadly Elusiveness)
Hit Points 135 (18d8+54)
Speed 30 ft

Damage Resistances non-magical bludgeoning, piercing and slashing; cold, psychic
Condition Immunities Blinded, Deafened, Frightened, Paralysed, Petrified, Stunned
Skills Lore +8, Shadow-lore +8, Perception +6
Senses Truesight 30 ft (otherwise blind), passive Perception 16
Languages Black Speech, Orkish, Westron
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Deadly Elusiveness. The Sorcerer's Armour Class is equal to 10 plus twice his Dexterity modifier.

Deadly Voice. The Ringwraiths scream at their enemies with long-drawn wails that rise to a deafeningly high piercing note. The Sorcerer can use his bonus action to make a Frightened creature become Stunned until the end of the Sorcerer's next turn.

Gathering Shadows. If the Sorcerer is accompanied by other Nazgûl, then the DC for saving throws against his abilities are raised by 1 for each other Nazgûl within 90 ft.

Actions

Multiattack. The Sorcerer makes one attack with his Black Sword and one with his Claw or Morgul-knife.

Black Sword of Mordor. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) slashing damage and 10 (2d6+3) necrotic damage.

Morgul-knife. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage and see *Morgul-knives,* above.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.

Black Breath. (see entry for The Sorcerer, Unclad and Invisible)

Shadow of Fear. *(see page 153)*

Terror of Desire. *(see page 153)*

Thing of Terror. *(see entry for The Sorcerer, Unclad and Invisible)*

Reaction

Dwimmerlaik. If a hero strikes the Sorcerer with a critical hit, he may use his reaction to invoke this ability. The hero must make a **DC 17 Strength** saving throw. On a failure, the hero's weapon shatters, and the hero receives the damage instead of the Ringwraith. Legendary weapons might not be destroyed, but are lost as a cold pain shoots through the hero's body and they drop the weapon.

Legendary Actions

The Sorcerer has 2 Legendary actions, given below. At the start of his turn he regains any spent Legendary actions.

Sword Strike. The Sorcerer attacks with his Black Sword of Mordor.

Bringer of Terror. The Sorcerer uses his Thing of Terror feature

Moreover, the pain will return every year on the day the character received the Morgul-wound, and the companion will have to pass a **DC 20 Wisdom** saving throw, or gain 5 (1d6 + 2) Shadow points.

There is only one positive side for those who survive a Morgul-wound: their senses become sharper, and they are more aware of things that cannot be seen. For example, the companion can see more in the dark than most, including Dwarves and Elves. In game terms, the hero gains Advantage on all **Perception** checks.

The Sorcerer of Forod

In life, Morlach was a tall and noble Northman, whose ambition pushed him too far. His mortal legacy is forgotten, as everything concerning him has been lost from the Tale of Years. Only a few among the Elves of Mirkwood remember how he was caught by his folk committing forbidden acts of necromancy, and how he was blinded with hot irons and sent away into the Forest of Mirkwood, to die as an outcast. Found by servants of Sauron sent to search for him, Morlach became another lethal weapon in the hand of his saviour, the Dark Lord.

Now Sauron has unleashed Morlach once again. The Sorcerer moves subtly, setting one lord against another, to destroy hope and friendship and leave only bitterness and grief in his wake. He usually appears in the shadows, Unclad and Invisible, whispering words of treachery to his thralls. But when he takes shape as a Dark Undead he is as deadly as he is terrifying.

The Sorcerer of Forod, Unclad and Invisible

Medium Undead

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Armour Class 18 (Deadly Elusiveness)
Hit Points 135 (18d8+54)
Speed 30 ft

Damage Immunities non-magical bludgeoning, piercing and slashing; cold, psychic
Condition Immunities Blinded, Deafened, Frightened, Paralysed, Petrified, Stunned
Skills Lore +8, Shadow-lore +8, Perception +6
Senses Truesight 30 ft (otherwise blind), passive Perception 16
Languages Black Speech, Orkish, Westron
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Deadly Elusiveness. The Sorcerer's Armour Class is equal to 10 plus twice his Dexterity modifier.
Gathering Shadows. If the Sorcerer is accompanied by other Nazgûl, then the DC for saving throws against his abilities are raised by 1 for each other Nazgûl within 90 ft.
Thing of Shadow. The Sorcerer is Invisible.

Actions

Black Breath. The Sorcerer can use its action to target a creature within 10 feet. That creature must make a **DC 17 Constitution** saving throw. On a failure, the creature gains 1 Shadow point and becomes Unconscious. They may be revived as an action, but are Miserable until they take a long rest. On a success, the creature gains 1 Shadow point but remains awake. If a Ringwraith targets an Unconscious creature then they are subject to The Black Shadow (see page 153).
Shadow of Fear. The Sorcerer can direct its terrible will upon any Frightened mortal (Dwarf, Hobbit, or Man) such that the victim becomes an agent for the Enemy. On a failure, see Shadow of Fear (page 153).
Thing of Terror. The Sorcerer can use his action to cause any number of targets within 60 feet of him to make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. Those that fail are Frightened until the end of the Ringwraith's next turn.

Legendary Actions

The Sorcerer has 2 Legendary actions, given below. At the start of his turn he regains any spent Legendary actions.

Breath of Mordor. The Sorcerer attacks with his Black Breath.
Bringer of Terror. The Sorcerer uses his Thing of Terror feature.

MORE NAZGÛL

A climatic scene featured in the adventure **Shadows in the North** (page 144) can see the Sorcerer of Mirkwood make an appearance, accompanied by a number of Ringwraiths. In that occasion, it is left to the Loremaster to judge how many Nazgûl will enter the fray, based on the composition and heroic stature of the Company of heroes, but also on the players' attitudes towards combat. It is not the aim of the scene to wipe out the entire fellowship, but to confront them with a challenge that will seriously make them consider escaping.

The Loremaster is free to use the stats for the Nazgûl of Dol Guldur contained in the *Mirkwood Campaign* supplement, or the generic ones described below (The Lord of the Nazgûl should not make an appearance under any circumstance, to avoid taking the spotlight away from the Sorcerer of Forod).

RINGWRAITH AS DARK UNDEAD

Medium Undead

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Armour Class 15
Hit Points 91 (14d8+28)
Speed 30 ft

Damage Resistances non-magical bludgeoning, piercing and slashing; cold, psychic
Condition Immunities Blinded, Deafened, Frightened, Paralysed, Petrified, Stunned
Skills Investigation +4, Perception +4
Senses Truesight 30 ft (otherwise blind), passive Perception 14
Languages Black Speech, Orkish, Westron
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Deadly Voice. The Ringwraiths scream at their enemies with long-drawn wails that rise to a deafeningly high piercing note. The Ringwraith can use his bonus action to make a Frightened creature become Stunned until the end of the Ringwraith's next turn.
Fear of Fire. If a torch or other flame comes within 10 feet of him, the Ringwraith suffers Disadvantage on attack rolls.
Gathering Shadows. If the Ringwraith is accompanied by other Nazgûl, then the DC for saving throws against his abilities are raised by 1 for each Nazgûl within 90 ft.

Actions

Multiattack. The Ringwraith makes one attack with his broadsword and one with his claw.
Broadsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) slashing damage.
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) slashing damage.
Black Breath. The Ringwraith can use its action to target a creature within 10 feet. That creature must make a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw. On a failure, the creature gains 1 Shadow point and becomes Unconscious. They may be revived as an action, but are Miserable until they take a long rest. On a success, the creature gains 1 Shadow point but remains awake. If a Ringwraith targets an Unconscious creature then they are subject to The Black Shadow (see page 153).
Shadow of Fear. The Ringwraith can direct its terrible will upon any Frightened mortal (Dwarf, Hobbit, or Man) such that the victim becomes an agent for the Enemy. The Ringwraith may use its action to force the target to make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failure, see Shadow of Fear (page 153).
Thing of Terror (1/day). The Ringwraith can use his action to cause any number of targets within 60 feet of him to make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw. Those that fail are Frightened until the end of the Ringwraith's next turn.

Reaction

Dwimmerlaik. If a hero strikes the Ringwraith with a critical hit, he may use his reaction to invoke this ability. The hero must make a **DC 15 Strength** saving throw. On a failure, the hero's weapon shatters, and the hero receives the damage instead of the Ringwraith. Legendary weapons might not be destroyed, but are lost as a cold pain shoots through the hero's body and they drop the weapon.

Ringwraith, Unclad and Invisible

Medium Undead

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

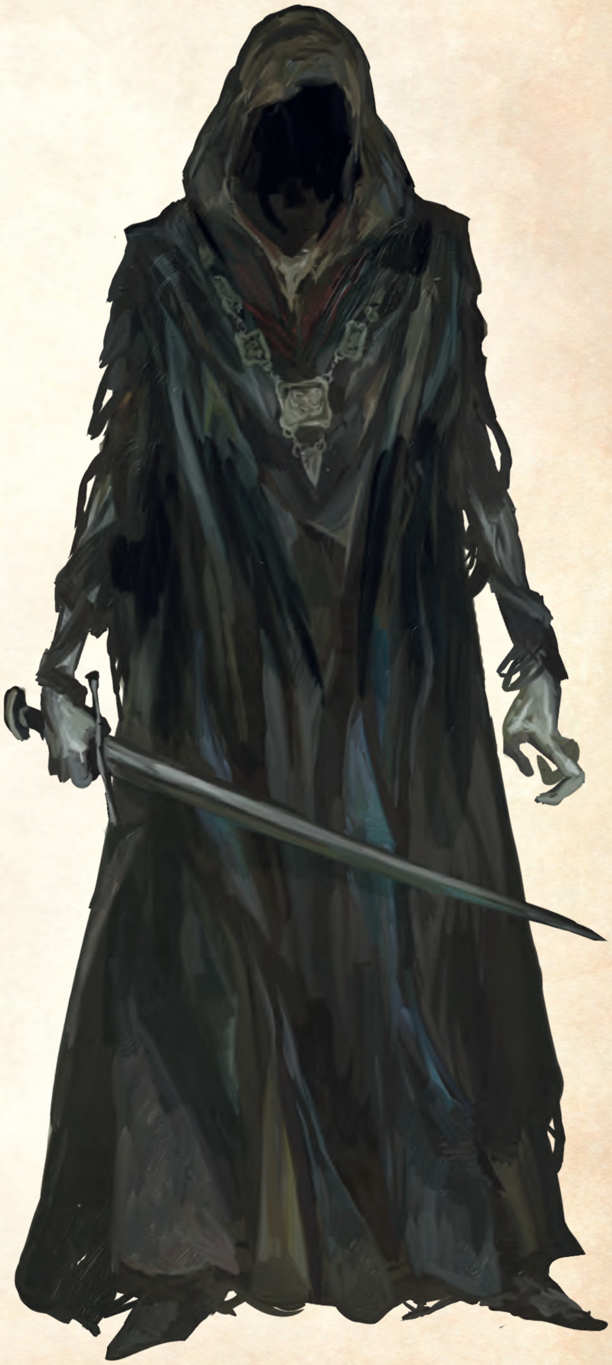
Armour Class 15
Hit Points 91 (14d8+28)
Speed 30 ft

Damage Resistances non-magical bludgeoning, piercing and slashing; cold, psychic
Condition Immunities Blinded, Deafened, Frightened, Paralysed, Petrified, Stunned
Skills Investigation +4, Perception +4
Senses Truesight 30 ft (otherwise blind), passive Perception 14
Languages Black Speech, Orkish, Westron
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Gathering Shadows. If the Ringwraith is accompanied by other Nazgûl, then the DC for saving throws against his abilities are raised by 1 for each Nazgûl within 90 ft.
Thing of Shadow. The Ringwraith is Invisible.

Actions

Black Breath. The Ringwraith can use its action to target a creature within 10 feet. That creature must make a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw. On a failure, the creature gains 1 Shadow point and becomes Unconscious. They may be revived as an action, but are Miserable until they take a long rest. On a success, the creature gains 1 Shadow point but remains awake. If a Ringwraith targets an Unconscious creature then they are subject to The Black Shadow (see page 153).
Shadow of Fear. The Ringwraith can direct its terrible will upon any Frightened mortal (Dwarf, Hobbit, or Man) such that the victim becomes an agent for the Enemy. The Ringwraith may use its action to force the target to make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failure, see Shadow of Fear (page 153).
Thing of Terror (1/day). The Ringwraith can use his action to cause any number of targets within 60 feet of him to make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw. Those that fail are Frightened until the end of the Ringwraith's next turn.



APPENDIX B: LOREMASTER CHARACTERS

The following characters feature in the various stories interwoven in Erebor Adventures*. Each entry provides a listing of the most prominent entries for the individual. A bold entry indicates especially useful information, such as a statblock.*

Aefre, wife of Eutaric 102, 105
Balin the Statesman,son of Fundin 7, 29, 43, 119, 130, 139, 142
King Bard, lord of Dale 130, 139, 142
Bryni, Lord of Strandburg 37
Clifford Sedger, Man of Bree 52
Clovis the Hobbit 11
King Dáin, King under the Mountain 67, 142
Domi, scholar from the Blue Mountains 46, **57**, 138
Dwalin the Warrior, brother of Balin 49, 62, **141,**
Lord Elstan, aged Captain of Dale 70, 83, 130, 132, 139
Eutaric of Woodland Hall 101, 105, **106**

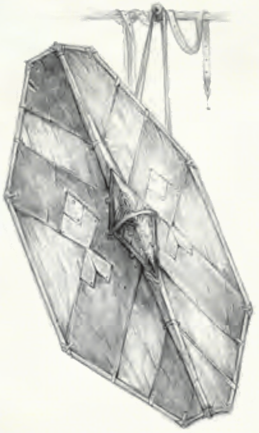
Firbul the Goblin, agent of Morlach 53, **55**, 60
Gandalf the Grey, wizard of some renown 127, 135, 142
Ginar, Dwarf farmer 73
Greystroke, Hunter of Monsters 69, 74, 89
Gunvar, Lord of Ashbrook 37, **39**, 130
Gwion, dealer of musical instruments 36
Gylfi, son of Gisli, keeper of the Glittering Gate 111
Lord Hakon, courtier to King Bard 6, **21**, 63, 130
Haldis, a fisherwoman 101, **112**
Halward, Reeve of the Quays 35
Holti, antique dealer 101, 106
Thegn Jofur, courtier to King Bard 7, **48**, 62, 130, **132**
Kasper the Bandit, Longo's lieutenant **20**, 53
Katun the Merchant 12, 130, 136

Kelda the Embroiderer 11,
The Brothers Khuldrim 69, **78-9**
Linnon, Wayward Elf 114
Longo the Bandit-lord 10, **25**,
Magan, apprentice of Orsmid, niece of Kelda 101, **102-4**, 118
Morlach, the Sorcerer of Forod 6, 133, **154-5**
Nefgeir, innkeeper of The Pike and Eel **100**, 105

Niping the Smith 27
Odvarr, head of the Guild of Artisans of Lake-town 97, 107-9, 116,118, 130
Orsmid, master smith and sculptor 97, **100**, 130
Thegn Osgar 37
Raenar the Plunderer, Dragon of the North 66, 92, **94**
Sígar the Dwarf, follower of Niping 45
Skarf Skulson 75, 79,130
Skirfira Silvertongue, Dwarven scholar 69, 74, 89
Swain the Enforcer, Longo's lieutenant **20**, 53
Thrun the Toymaker, friend of Balin 31, 131, 137
Thulim, nephew of Dulin 11
Ukgash Burnt-Orc, traitorous Orc-leader 83, **84**
Vig the Spy, Longo's lieutenant **19**, 53
Witherfinger, mysterious wanderer of the Waste 82
Wruenele, young Fire-drake 66, 92, **94**

Appendix C: Places & Things

The following locations and items are important to the events of Erebor Adventures*. Some locations are known by more than one name, or might have an item or location of interest contained within a larger category.*



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